Marxism Today

Theoretical and Discussion Journal of the Communist Party

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Editorial Comments

SANTIAGO CARRILLO

THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF SPAIN IN THE FIGHT FOR FREEDOM

James Klugmann
Georgi Dimitrov and the Seventh Congress of the Communist International (Part 2)

Jack Lindsay
To Dimitrov—Poem

Peter Kerrigan, John Williamson, Peter Zinkin
Memories of Dimitrov

John Oakley
Marcuse and Marxism

Discussion

Bill Warren — Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain

Dave Waddington — Crisis of Man and Environment

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MARXISM TODAY

THEORETICAL AND DISCUSSION JOURNAL OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

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Editorial Comments

THE Eleventh Report of the Criminal Law Revision Committee was nearly eight years in gestation. There is evidence to show the government intend to act far more speedily in its implementation. The considerable concern that has been expressed in the press and in legal and civil liberty circles is likely to be ignored.

During the past two years of Tory rule, there has been a marked tendency towards authoritarianism and features of the police state in this country. The Report fits into this general trend. It marks the possibility of drastic inroads into some of our cherished and hard-won freedoms. In fact, the line between safeguarding the liberty of the subject and effective crime prevention is becoming blurred.

As a result, the Committee advocates the abolition of the caution the police are obliged to give a person before he is charged. Alibis would have to be given to the police when a person is charged, but with little real safeguard to prevent the police calling on witnesses thus disclosed. And with no equivalent right of the accused to know in advance what the prosecution case will be.

The accused's right to silence would be abolished and previous convictions brought into the trial in some cases. An accused choosing not to appear in the witness box would suffer as a result.

The philosophy behind these proposals has been portrayed by Mr. Robert Marks, the new Metropolitan Police Commissioner in his important lecture to the Royal Society of Medicine on June 20. English justice, he said, is ineffective in dealing with those who set out to break the law and can exploit its weaknesses. It was effective only for dealing with the compliant, the weak, the stupid, the illiterate and the spontaneous. We should not be hampered by artificial procedural safeguards designed to prevent the punishment of the innocent. He does not say why not.

50% of those acquitted are not innocent in the real sense, said Mr. Marks. But there is no reliable source for such a remarkable figure and, in any event, how guilty are people found innocent in jury trial. Perhaps trials should be abolished in favour of a more efficient police force arriving at speedy verdicts.

In another recent speech, Lord Hailsham, the Lord Chancellor suggested that criminal violence and "social" violence like sit-ins, trade disputes and political demonstrations, act on each other. As a result he favours a tough attitude towards criminal sanctions.

Yet the Lord Chancellor himself pointed out that criminals who deserved serious penalties usually got them, and said present criminal law and procedure were not to blame for increased crime.

Why then favour changing this law and procedure? Is the pressure on because the law is proving unable to deal with mass actions by miners, railwaymen, dockers and political demonstrations?

This would fit in with Tory legal measures to curb trade unions, picketing, night assemblies, squatting and the like.

The danger is that changes in criminal law and procedure would not be easy to reverse in the years ahead.

We should not lightly give up laws and procedures won in bitter struggles of the past to protect our democratic rights.

IN HONOUR OF THOMAS PAINE

Radical history was advanced at the University of East Anglia, Norwich, with the first biennial lecture on Thomas Paine, given by Edward Thompson last May. The memorial lectures have been endowed by two members of the Thomas Paine Society, the University being chosen for its proximity to Paine's birthplace of Thetford, Norfolk.

Thompson added extensively to the valuable material that is in his book, *The Making of the English Working Class*, (Gollancz, 1963), and especially pleased his listeners with a wealth of material on radical struggles in Norwich in the mid-1790s. His subject, "The Paineite Underground, 1796-1801".

He said that, that authorities of the time could not let Paine's ideas be debated—they had to drive them underground. William Godwin, however, arose as a "safe" radical, and the Godwinians suffered nothing during the repressions.

Thompson quoted examples of flourishing

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underground radical views; the freemasonry of Irish patriotism travelled through Liverpool to Bolton to London; the characteristic leader of the illegal trade unionism was a follower of Paine's *Rights of Man*. Tinkers and ball-mongers plied these ideas.

The Thomas Paine Society* is organising a *Rights of Man* Exhibition (181st anniversary of the publication of the first part) at the Marx Memorial Library from September 9.

The material on display will be wholly from private collections and will include early editions of the work as well as the edition for publishing which Richard Carlile was first tried and the very scarce Elihu Palmer's *Principles of Nature* (Carlile, 1819) which was included in the charge against Carlile.

* 23 Pinders House Road, Nottingham NG2 2EG.

We regret the brevity of our 'Editorial Comments' this month. This was due to the need to complete publication of our Dimitrov material.

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security cannot be made dependent solely on that. There just is not enough time.

J. R. Horth challenges our attitudes towards increasing the Gross National Product. A logical development from the original *Marxism Today* article, but what are the implications for present Communist policy? Production means employment, be it Concorde, car industry, or motorways. We have always countered the argument that "armaments mean work" with the alternative of switching these resources to socially useful production. Should we not now be emphasising the need for working people to be vitally interested in *what* they produce, and *how*, and its social effects? Why the "social responsiblity" question for scientists but not for production workers?

We need clear and positive lines of policy. For a start, no more hedging over Concorde. Of course there are difficulties, but scope is offered for bold, imaginative, Socialist-orientated policies for each industry, each establishment, which will begin to put some realism and relevance into *British Road* concepts. I believe that we must adopt the same approach and criteria to all our political activity.

Naturally, there are critics. When we were fighting for a broad, popular, front against the threat of fascism and war we appeared more able to face up to the consequent problems; now we seem to speak with two voices. Is it that, at root, we lack confidence that the workers will understand? This, at a time when an increasing number are becoming disillusioned with the commercial manipulation of contemporary society and are questioning the whole way of life and its values.

In those anti-war, anti-fascist struggles, and in the later CND, we were attacked by the ultra-Left as reformist traitors. Only Socialism could prevent war, and therefore Communist policy of a broad alliance, not Socialism now, was a betrayal of the revolution. The same when the war against fascism became a world-wide reality; as allies of a capitalist Britain and USA, the Soviet Union—and British Communists—were retreating from the class struggle and Socialist revolution. Etc., etc.

A Challenge to Marxist Theory

Was not our broad policy correct? And is not the world "environment" threat as serious, perhaps more so, demanding just as dynamic an approach? Instead, some comrades present the simplistic Socialism versus Environmental Crisis (*if* it exists) analysis; or even the "bourgeois deviation" thing. Slogans of the current ultra-Left, whose aim is always to destroy the Communist Party, are now heard *inside* the Party. Not necessarily a bad thing, but needing recognition and analysis.

So, we need a thorough and continuous assessment of the facts concerned with environmental problems. From what I understand, and the countering arguments seem very weak, the real situation may be far more serious than we think. The environmental crisis is not just another "issue" to be dealt with by appropriate resolution and policy statement. It is not a question of "pollution" simply—that is more of a symptom of the basic illness; every vote catching politician is jumping on that band wagon. What is presented is a real challenge to our fundamental thinking and Marxist theory.

The previous articles have suggested clearly the lines of Labour Movement activity needed. Of course there are other related problems which have been raised but not argued out. Can we logically maintain that the road to Communism lies through a super-abundance of goods? Is our socialist propaganda too grossly materialist? Such questions need open discussion, if not now, then soon. And there is a need to remove the fears and suspicions some comrades have that discussion of controversial questions is only a safety-valve, with no significant consequence.

This discussion is now closed. Two further contributions—by S. Jacoby and H. J. Brown—will be published in succeeding numbers, after which Richard Hayter and John Cox will be asked to reply.

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Document:

The Communist Party of Spain in the Fight for Freedom

Santiago Carrillo

Great struggles have been taking place in Spain during the last two years. Whilst we hope soon to publish material on recent developments of the struggle, we are printing below, as important background material, extracts from a speech made by the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Spain, at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party in September 1970.

Errors and Successes

Comrades, as the outlines of the pact for freedom begin to take shape—the pact for freedom which will enable the peoples of Spain to affirm their personality and initiate a stage of political and social progress, held in check by the present regime, it is appropriate to pause and consider those points of our strategy that have made it possible for the present level to be reached.

Not all our work, in more than thirty years of illegality and struggle against the dictatorship and in the changing conditions experienced in that long period, has been successful. During this time we have shared in the errors common to the whole international communist movement which the 20th Congress of the CPSU started to tackle, errors which cannot be separated from the successes and fundamental historic victories of that movement. However, it is not to these that I now wish to refer, but to our own specific errors.

For example, it is a fact that up to 1948 we did not understand that the Leninist counsel of working in the mass organisations, even the reactionary ones, also applied to us. There is no doubt that this lack of understanding was linked with a leftist error which had its roots in the concept that the anti-fascist war was still going on even after the defeat of Hitler and that our victory would be attained basically by armed struggle. This error also led us to carry on the guerrilla struggle longer than necessary, when that path could yield no more and its possibilities were exhausted.

These errors, from a certain point onwards, were errors of a strategic character, since they not only affected tactics but made it objectively more difficult to get the mass movement going and to form the necessary strategic alliances to put an end to the Franco regime.

Later on we undoubtedly committed other mistakes, in our estimation of the regime's capacity for manoeuvre and its probable length of life. These had their roots in impatience to get out of this situation, and in revolutionary optimism. These errors were not so serious as the earlier ones; they did not affect our strategic line.

But even though we made mistakes—and only those who do not work and struggle do not make mistakes—we are convinced that the development of the guerrilla struggle during the period of the world war against fascism was correct; and even though it did not bring down the regime, it was the internationalist contribution of our Party to the struggle against Hitlerism, for it constituted an important curb preventing Francoism from open participation in the war on the side of the fascist powers. The credit which the chiefs of the regime claimed for Spanish "non-belligerency" belongs in reality to the guerrilla resistance against Francoism and in great measure to the Communist Party, the soul of that resistance.

Divisions—Real and Fictitious

In the same way, the subsequent turn in the direction of mass struggle was also a correct line. I want to stress the importance of our call for national reconciliation in 1956, which was the basic starting point for the development of the class struggle, the appearance of the new workers' movement, of the different detachments of the mass movement and the gradual creation of conditions for a general convergence against the dictatorship. The policy of national reconciliation was an indispensable step for overcoming the rigid political and ideological set-up inherited from the war, which was preventing the broad unity of the people. Its purpose was to overcome the difference between conquerors and conquered, to overcome sterile concepts of revenge. It was the recognition of a

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fact: that passively or actively, consciously or unconsciously, for one reason or another, a part of the people had been on Franco's side. And that that part of the people—peasants, middle strata and some backward members of the working class—had lost the war just as we had, even though they had been members of the victorious army; for the only ones to benefit from the victory were the landlord and financial oligarchy and the falangist *nouveaux riches*. In this situation, the division between those who had fought on the Republican side and those who had fought on Franco's—a division which the forces of the oligarchy were striving to perpetuate—was losing its significance. Beneath this fictitious division, the real division—between the exploited classes and the oligarchy of exploiters—was beginning to reappear; and only the unity of the two "infantries" and the new generations that had not fought in the war but had suffered from its outcome could enable the mass struggle and the struggle for democracy to be implanted in the broad terrain which would assist their development and strengthening.

Despite certain leftist criticisms, the policy of national reconciliation did not open the road to "class conciliation"; indeed, it was one of the most decisive blows precisely against the policy of class conciliation which Francoism was endeavouring to pursue, basing itself on the mental and psychological aftermath of the civil war and on fascist ideology. The policy of national reconciliation, of the reconciliation of the people against the oligarchy and its dictatorship, opened the road to the broad development of the class struggle, to a new alignment of the forces genuinely in opposition and struggle in our country.

With this policy our Party brilliantly demonstrated its mastery of the dialectical method and its revolutionary capability.

Coming to the Surface

It is no accident that from that time on—1956—the working class struggle should have started to grow to a considerable extent; that there should have arisen and developed an ever more powerful student movement; that there should have opened up within the Church a process of differentiation between the integrists and the forces of progress; that we should have begun to penetrate more deeply into the countryside.

This policy created the conditions in which our Party could begin the process, slow and complicated but tenaciously followed, that we have called *coming to the surface*.

It seems, from what we have read in certain "documents", that some of those who supported and took part in this policy of *coming to the surface* are now objecting to it and describing it, among other things, as adventurist. They accuse it—such are the lengths overweening passion can lead to!—of being the cause of the repression by the regime. That is to say, they practically justify the repression. They forget that when we were not in a position to come to the surface or even think of doing so, the Franco repression was far fiercer, that there were no arrests or trials that did not end in shootings, life sentences or long sessions of torture, lasting for months on end. They deny what is in fact the truth: that the regime has retreated and become less ferocious precisely to the extent that the Party and the mass movement have come out into the open. It is perhaps understandable that this view should be held by some young leftists who have just entered the present struggles and did not experience the Franco repression at its height but only know it in its present form, and believe that the way to avoid it is by ultra-clandestinity. But that some of those who talk this way should be people who have had experience of both periods, yesterday and today, is altogether inexplicable.

It is true that coming to the surface represented a calculated risk. It meant emerging from the underground—that is, from the work of small highly secret groups, from the restricted distribution of propaganda among a tiny minority of initiates, from actions by heroic secret members—into mass activity, ever more openly. It meant continually uncovering our batteries, promoting members who had to make themselves known in the mass movement, to keep sticking their heads up, with the risk, naturally, of getting hit.

But practice quickly showed the correctness of the statement that the militants' best defence against repression is the mass movement. We saw immediately the difference in the situation of a member arrested in the course of a movement of the masses, sheltered and sustained by them, from that of members of previous ultra-secret groups, isolated from the masses, when they fell into the hands of the police.

This line of coming to the surface—what gave rise to it? The self-same needs of the struggle, and the objective conditions which had been coming into being. So long as the confrontation between the regime and the democratic forces was taking place in a terrain apart from the masses, in the form of a fight between a powerful and brutal State apparatus and a few daring and almost invisible groups of revolutionary fighters, the possibility of change could not materialise, nor could the people believe in its feasibility.

It was necessary to create the conditions in which the dilemma between Francoism and democracy could be viewed with the possibility of its being solved in favour of democracy. There was a moment, just after the Second World War, in which the unity

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of the Republican forces in emigration and the existence (though this was ephemeral) of a government in exile which stood for unity, along with the guerrilla struggle inside the country, provided the nucleus of a concrete democratic alternative to Francoism.

The Democratic Alternative

But this solution very quickly faded out. And it became evident that the democratic alternative must be formed inside the country, must materialise and arise concretely in Spain, face to face with the regime and struggling to win ground from it.

This meant to carry on, inside the country itself, winning *areas* of freedom, *bases* of democratic struggle. The possibility of winning such areas or bases by armed struggle did not exist; we had proved that in practice during years of guerrilla struggle. Another tactic for attaining the same result was necessary: the revolutionary struggle of the masses.

Progress made in this respect has been slow but sure. If we look at the "liberated areas" won by the working class movement we shall perceive that they are already impressive.

—From the strike regarded under the law as a crime of insurrection to the strike as everyday practice.

—From the total prohibition of all meetings and assemblies to the imposition of now-frequent meetings and assemblies in factories, trade unions, churches.

—From demonstrations treated as the crime of insurrection to demonstrations as an ordinary form of struggle.

—From the corporate vertical syndicates, the sole trade union organisation permitted by law (though not capable of enforcement), to the Workers' Commissions as an independently-formed movement of the working class, classified as illegal by the Tribunals but imposed in practice.

The area of freedom thus won, imposed in struggle by the working class, is very extensive if one looks back over the not-so-distant years.

In the realm of the student struggle the changes have also been tremendous. From the fascist SEU they have passed to the present student movement with its meetings, its strikes, wall-newspapers and demonstrations.

A similar process is now beginning to develop in the countryside. The same thing is happening with the women's and professional movements. Even the bourgeois opposition is revealing itself openly on the surface, despite the regime's laws.

Those of you who have visited other countries will have had occasion to verify that very often our foreign friends do not fully understand the situation in Spain. How is it possible, they ask, that under the Franco dictatorship democratic struggle is carried on and democratic forms of mass movement are employed, similar to those that are legal in the democratic countries? How is it possible that these mass movements send their delegates to international conferences just as they would do from democratic countries?

Some foreign observers explain this situation as one of the results of a policy of "liberalisation" pursued by the Franco regime itself; and the regime's representatives in international negotiations also try to stress this is so as to dispel the international reserve that is felt towards the dictatorship, declaring that it is in the process of evolution.

Areas of Freedom

It is not true that the Franco regime is liberalising itself. What we are experiencing is the result of the line of *coming to the surface*. That is, the creation in reality, in the teeth of the Francoist institutions and laws, which continue formally to exist as before, of areas of freedom in which the battle against the regime is waged from a solid and material base. In a manner of speaking this means raising up, against the power of the Francoist state, bases that might be called bases of power and democratic struggle; it means extending and developing these areas and winning ground from the regime. Before the Spanish experience, it could be considered that against a fascist power based on a politico-military apparatus, such bases could only be attained though military struggle, by liberating geographical areas. The Spanish experience has shown that in certain circumstances these bases can be created by means of revolutionary political mass struggle. For the success of this strategy, the revolutionary militancy of the Party and the masses is not enough: just as indispensable is a very daring and open policy which softens up the enemy ideologically and politically, which foments the contradictions in his midst; which is capable of finding hitherto unsuspected allies and neutralising, day by day, the greatest possible quantity of resistance. Our militancy would not have been of much use with a narrow, dogmatic policy built up on clichés.

Certainly none of these areas of freedom are definitive conquests; one or other of them may be jeopardised. At a given moment the gains achieved in an enterprise, a locality, a professional association or a university can be momentarily lost as a result of repression by the police or employers. But if one of these areas disappears in one place, another appears in some previously-paralysed place. Taken as a whole, the areas of liberty are extending and broadening; there are Granada, and Yecla, and the Madrid "Metro" to show that this is true. The tactic of revolutionary mass struggle in this

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situation is very similar to that of guerrilla struggle.

In proportion as the areas of freedom grow larger in the politico-social geography of the country, so the situation of the regime becomes increasingly difficult. The masses prove in practice that it is possible to live in another way, that they can play an active political and social role which is denied to them by Francoism. The example bears fruit. The forces of the regime feel harrassed; a section of them begin to see that they cannot continue to rule in the old way and are moving away from the regime. The regime is shown to be increasingly weak, increasingly incapable of opposing this process.

This has nothing to do with "liberalisation"; it is a breach opened up from below, in tenacious struggle, smashing all resistance. If it were a "liberalisation" from above the regime would be ahead of events, legalising certain forms of action, attempting to assimilate what has been attained by the masses. But we can see that nothing like this is happening. The institutions continue formally to be the same fascist institutions; the principles, too, continue to be the identical fascist principles. The fascist laws remain unchanged. This process of democratic conquest is a struggle from below, against those in power. In this process of struggle the working class is indisputably the vanguard; but along with it, ever more resolutely, are marching the peasants and the forces of culture; and now important bourgeois forces are also beginning to join in.

The Party's Political Strategy

The whole process is no accidental chain of events; it is the fruit of a specific, conscious political strategy. Here the leading role of the Party stands out clearly. Although other forces are also taking part in this process and their contribution may be considerable, and though these forces may be increasingly conscious of the politico-social mechanism in which they are becoming integrated, the credit for the initial concept, the credit for opening this road in a situation very different from that of today when everything is becoming clear (a situation in which many people saw no possible way forward) —the credit for this initiative belongs to our Party's ability to apply the methods of Marxism-Leninism to the concrete historical situation. Because of this, together with the mass movement, together with other political forces, the Communist Party of Spain comes to the surface in this situation with a personality and a strength which cannot be denied, all attempts to isolate it and subject it to ostracism having failed.

Has any strategy perhaps appeared in the revolutionary camp which could seriously challenge ours? No, none. There is no political group today which seriously proposes, for example, to change the strategy based on revolutionary mass struggle for a strategy of armed struggle. If there existed the slightest objective conditions for such struggle there would be groups not only proposing it but carrying it out. There are none. At most, there is talk in certain leftist "documents" of armed struggle as a distant prospect. But now? We do not deny that in the future, at one or other moment, this form of struggle might become necessary. But for the moment the essential thing is to be clear on the actual tasks of struggle. And we say, and repeat, that today, by means of revolutionary mass struggle, the formulation of alliances and the establishment of rapprochements, the areas of freedom must continue to be broadened, causing the enemy to fall back, creating the conditions for the decisive offensive against the dictatorship, for the general strike and the national strike.

The only strategy which is really being put forward today against the one we recommend is a reformist strategy, though it wraps itself in revolutionary phraseology; it is a renunciation of the open revolutionary mass struggle, the renunciation of the process of coming to the surface to dispute the terrain face to face with the enemy, a return to ultra-clandestinity. In effect it is the old reformist concept of first carrying on the work of "consciousness-raising", of education by means of "documents", "seminars" and other academic means, in order to be able later—when?—to begin the struggle.

This concept is one hundred per cent reformist for it means abandoning all the positions won by the mass movement in order to go back to the underground, leaving the terrain open for the adversary. Francoism would rub its hands with glee were this concept to prosper. At best this tactic would simply amount to the abandonment of the political initiative by the working class, with the leadership of the democratic struggle passing to the bourgeoisie.

Such positions, it is true, can cover themselves with the most resounding revolutionary phrase-mongering; but they do not cease to be pure reformism, disguise it as they may.

We have been in the underground; we have carried on the guerrilla struggle in practice, alone. But that was in a different epoch, the epoch in which people were shot merely for belonging to a clandestine Party organisation. Along the path of struggle and sacrifice, the Party and the anti-Franco forces have overcome that situation.

Does this mean that we are against seminars, against agitation and propaganda, written and spoken? No, for it is our Party which conducts the most seminars and courses, and publishes and distributes the most written propaganda. But our Party keeps in mind the Leninist principle that the

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masses and revolutionaries are educated primarily through struggle; that the others are complementary forms of education. Revolutionary leaders and the revolutionary consciousness of the masses do not grow in the hothouse of seminars or in isolated élites; they grow in action. And practice in our country has confirmed this once again.

The tactic chosen for coming to the surface has required a skilful combination of legal possibilities and extra-legal methods; the existence of an ever more numerous vanguard, prepared to accept the risks of combat. The Leninist concept of the vanguard has nothing in common with the élitist ideas of certain small isolated groups. The idea of an élite signifies contempt for the masses, separation from them, underestimation of their role. The concept of the vanguard stems from the decisive role of the masses, the need to be part of them, to keep in closest contact with them and to know, at the proper time, how to take one step back in order to take two steps forward.

The Need for Leaders

Never have the masses and the vanguard needed leaders as they do in the present situation: well-tried, steady leaders, able to guide the movement and ensure its continuity. The class enemy knows this all too well and consequently strikes at the leaders, imprisons them, deprives them of jobs, persecutes them savagely. How many hundreds, even thousands, of leaders of the mass movement at various levels have been arrested, dismissed from their jobs, expelled from their Universities, to put them out of action? If the number of such cases were reckoned up from 1962, for example, the total would be huge, and this would explain the difficulties which have been encountered, from time to time, by the Workers' Commissions and other sections of the mass movement in the course of their development.

And for this reason it is absurd and incomprehensible to hear, in certain cases, criticism against "leaderism" or "bureaucratism" in the leadership of the present mass movements.

Those who utter such criticisms have no idea what the evil of "leaderism" or bureaucratism really is. This evil can manifest itself in legal movements, and above all in those movements which are in power, when the position of "leader" can mean a socially-privileged situation for the person who holds it. And as for bureaucratism, it too needs certain political, economic and social structures in order to proliferate.

But what are the "privileges" of our leaders? Dismissal, expulsion, imprisonment. For such "privileges" and all their consequences, only the most self-sacrificing, firm and courageous people are ready to be "leaders". The best, in every sense. In periods such as this, the careerist, the ambitious persons, are not wont to enter the ranks of the revolutionary movement; they seek their careers in other fields or remain tucked away for safety, awaiting better times.

Nor is there any danger that a layer of bureaucrats may be formed in an illegal Party or movement. Certain folk who talk today about the "bureaucracy" of our Party either do not know the meaning of the word or else they are ill-intentioned. It is true that in the Party there are paid functionaries, professional revolutionaries. But those members of the Party who draw such a salary today would earn double the amount if they were following their trade as skilled workers, technicians or professional people. To accept the job of a professional today means a real sacrifice in the economic sphere, and its privileges and distinctions are imprisonment, long sentences and tortures, or emigration.

The selection of cadres and leaders in conditions such as ours offers the best guarantees of disinterest, unselfishness, militancy and complete devotion to the cause.

Whensoever there are mistakes in the work of one or other organ, whensoever there are comrades who do not know how to become closely linked with the masses, who lack receptivity, initiative or breadth of judgement; whensoever there is dogmatism, sectarianism or opportunism—then let us call them by their names and not employ descriptive terms like "leaderism" and "bureacratism" which are an unjustified, mimicking transposition of terms that have nothing to do with our real situation and problems.

Today the Party and the mass movement need dozens, hundreds of leaders with authority, prestige and influence, completely devoted to the struggle, able to renounce all personal interest. Do not let us fall into the foolishness of confusing what has been called "the cult of personality" (a far profounder and more complex phenomenon) with the anarchistic and destructive attitude which is against all genuine organisational principles! Without organisation, without leaders, there is no Party and no mass movement. To defend the leaders against persecution by police and employers is a vital necessity. Lenin, criticising the left-wing extremism which artificially counterposed leaders and masses, said that this was "ridiculously absurd" and "stupid". "What is particularly amusing", he went on, "is that in fact, instead of the old leaders, who hold generally accepted views on simple matters, new leaders are brought forth (under cover of the slogan "Down with the leaders!") who talk rank stuff and nonsense". (*"Left-Wing" Communism—an Infantile Disorder*. Collected Works Vol. 31, p. 43.)

In the conditions of our struggle, not even new leaders who talk arrant stuff and nonsense arise; what arises are would-be leaders who are waiting,

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before they exercise their leadership, for the tortures to come to an end, the repression to stop, and the role of leader to be free from such unpleasantness.

Comrades, we have deliberately chosen the strategy and tactics which are enabling us to come to the surface. The road has been thorny and difficult. But today nobody can seriously deny that this has been the road leading to the victory of democracy in our country.

Problems in the Development of our Party

Though our line may be correct, though we may achieve successes, it is clear the we also have difficulties and problems, and not small ones. Problems already old which in one way or another, at one level or another, have always been with us. And new problems as well, characteristic of the present situation.

(a) The Repression

A serious and constant problem is the repression and its political and moral consequences.

The intensity of the repression has decreased, but it is perhaps more widespread than in other periods. It continues to have effects on morale which should not be underestimated. There are still opponents of the regime who are paralysed by fear of the repression—more, perhaps, by the psychological effects of the period of terror when murder and torture were rampant than by what actually exists now. This still inhibits many workers from taking an active and organised part in the struggle.

Even today, repressive attacks succeed in some cases in temporarily disorganising the battle-array of the Party and the mass movement, causing incidental retreats in one place or another. For example, in Asturias the arrest, first of Horacio Fernandez Iguanzo and then of Julio Gallardo, the presence in prison of a dozen of the best cadres of the Party, jailed and sentenced during recent years, has undoubtedly had an effect on the functioning of the Party and the mass movement. The basic difference between this and previous periods is that the repression has not paralysed either the Party or the mass struggle; it no longer has the catastrophic consequences it had in the past, when one loss sometimes meant the dispersal of the Party in an entire province for a matter of years, inasmuch as the loss could not be made good. Nevertheless the delay, the slowing-down in the rhythm of growth and development which certain less-spectacular arrests cause today is very harmful at a period when objective conditions demand the stepping-up of political activity and organisation. Hence the struggle against the repression, for an amnesty, is at once a fundamental democratic demand and a direct form of defence of our Party and all the forces which are effectively struggling against the dictatorship.

In recent years, that is to say, from the great working-class struggles of 1962, one of the most dangerous means of repression used by the government and the employers has been dismissal, the sack. How many factory cells have been broken up by this measure, how many factory Workers' Commissions disorganised, how many worker-activists literally put out of action!

And this is because a worker who is fired from a big enterprise where he was carrying on broad and effective mass work cannot usually get another job except in a very small workshop where the possibilities of action are greatly reduced.

Struggle for Solidarity

It follows that the struggle for solidarity with those dismissed must today be decisive too for the rapid growth of the workers' movement and the organisation of the Party.

At the same time another need arises: in order to hit back at the repressive policy of sacking, the militants who are fired by the big enterprises must maintain contact with them and should continue in every possible instance to keep their influence with the workers who know and respect them, so as to promote new cadres and recruit new members in those enterprises.

Among the long-standing problems which we still encounter, it is worth mentioning the matter of *fatigue*, which the length and severity of the struggle produce at times in some comrades. In the past, this used to happen more often. There were comrades who, though they did not give up their communist ideas, ceased all practical activity; it was not easy, far from it, to persevere in the struggle, to go on working after going in and out of prison once or several times, with the likelihood of being arrested again at any moment. If one could count the comrades who throughout these thirty years have fought in the underground organisation of the Party for a time and have then withdrawn, the number would be very great. These comrades often help; they even carry on some propaganda work around them and in their personal circle, but they do not occupy an active post in the vanguard.

Today, with the growth of the opposition and the creation of conditions of struggle which are in every way less difficult, this kind of thing is less frequent. But it still happens. Sometimes this is influenced by personal or family problems, which can occur in a man's life and temporarily hold him back. Perhaps it may be easier today to avoid these withdrawals by showing more concern for the comrades concerned, transferring them for a time when they are in a critical situation to some

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work which is less exposed. That is to say, giving them a measure of rest which will help them to recuperate and attend to their personal problems. In any case it is very necessary to create in our organisations an atmosphere which will allow a member who is momentarily fatigued or weighed down by personal problems to say so openly to the Party without either he himself or his comrades regarding this as a dereliction of duty.

We should thus avoid cases in which comrades who feel the need for a rest and dare not say so frankly, look for a political reason to justify their passivity, alleging differences which have no serious objective basis. It must be recognised that to be a communist in present conditions, and above all to fight actively in the vanguard, constantly facing well-known risks, and the consequences of all this for one's family, requires a very great strength of character, great firmness and a great spirit of sacrifice.

Against Spontaneity

In other groups which are functioning in the opposition, and even in the working class movement, which do not have the same consistent vanguard position as our Party, these problems do not present themselves in the same way. Those groups adapt the rhythm and intensity of their activity to the fluctuations of spirit among their members. Thus we find, for example, that we have allies who, while they uphold revolutionary ideas, sometimes hold back when it is time to act on the grounds that the masses are "not ready" for this or that action. These groups allow themselves to be carried along by spontaneity; when the struggle at a given moment, develops actively in an enterprise or a professional sphere, they show themselves active. When the struggle dies down, they return to passivity instead of continuing to carry on vanguard work. Then they take shelter behind what they call the work of "consciousness-raising" with "documents" and seminars, to wait until the tide turns again.

In some provinces these tendencies are found even among our own comrades who have sometimes come from organisations of this type or are in touch with them. For these comrades, then, all struggle becomes "subjectivism" or "adventurism". They fall unconsciously into the deviation of considering that it is first necessary to raise consciousness, to prepare the ground, in order to start to struggle later, unaware that around them the masses are conscious of many of their serious problems and would be prepared to struggle already if only the vanguard would organise and lead them.

It is precisely this characteristic of the severity and length of the struggle that demands that the Party should constantly promote new cadres, with the ability to occupy the vacant positions, to extend the strength and organisation of our Party; it demands a titanic effort to increase our organisation. This also poses the need to promote in particular young members, less liable to fatigue, with greater aptitude for the specific conditions in which our struggle is developing today.

(b) Old and New Generations

While we are on the subject of the problems of our development, I want to refer to one which is perhaps the most important today: it is that which arises from the need to combine and harmonise the veteran forces and the new forces in our Party. Here problems not only of age but of mentality overlap; real problems of the generations.

The limits, the demarcation, are not sharply defined, but some of the features which differentiate them can be pointed out. When we speak of the veterans, we are referring actually to two generations —that formed in the heat of the Great October Socialist Revolution, which came to the Party inspired by that great event, and the one that matured later, in the period of the Popular Front and the national revolutionary war. When we speak of the young generations, we are referring to those which have arisen under the Franco dictatorship, in the period of the struggle to emerge from the underground, to come to the surface; in a situation in which the problems—not so much perhaps in content as in form—have changed considerably. The traditional formations have undergone a crisis; new formations have sprung up. It has come about that our main ally is a renovatory Catholic current, which did not exist in the thirties or before. A series of theoretical and political schemas characteristic of past conditions has been superseded.

These new generations have lived through other revolutions: the Chinese, the Cuban, anti-colonialism, the liberation war of the Vietnamese people. . . .

They belong to an epoch in which there is no longer one single socialist State, the USSR, encircled by imperialism; in which there is no longer a single international Party, the Communist International.

Today there are already fourteen socialist States and the communist movement is an international union of national Parties; and the unanimity and cohesion without any cracks of the first period have been replaced by the present variety and differences, the object of open discussion and polemics.

Clearly, the differences in background influence the mentality, the habits of mind and the way of viewing problems of the different generations.

And in addition there is a far more lively ideological struggle, not only against imperialist ideology

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but in the heart of our own camp, started not always by outside influences but by the diversity of forms, experiences and models of socialism that are springing up in consequence of the real diversity of the conditions in which the revolution is evolving in various countries.

These are very deep-going changes, which make the combination and harmonisation between the veterans and the young more than a simple question of age and temperament.

Other problems are connected with this, such as that, for example, which stems from the fact that though the main force of our Party is inside the country, there is still in the emigration a number—and not a small number—of members and also part of the leadership.

It must be said that these problems, which could have been the source of a serious crisis in a party less solid and less developed than ours, are being solved as we go along, without serious difficulty.

I believe this is due, on the one hand, to the ability shown by the core of the veterans to tackle today's problems in an open spirit, to set the Party on the level of the period we are living in, and to open the way for the younger forces; and, on the other hand, to the consciousness and rapid maturing of these younger forces, who do not feel out of place in a Party which renews itself and keeps abreast of things with a leading and revolutionary vocation which is kept up to date.

(translated by Nan Green)

Georgi Dimitrov and the 7th Congress of the Communist International Part II

James Klugmann

How Fascism Arises

An important part of Dimitrov's description of fascism was his discussion on what fascism was *not*, his examination of a series of false conceptions of fascism which had arisen, particularly inside the Social Democratic Parties. Fascism is not, he argued, a form of state power "standing above both classes, the proletariat and the bourgeoisie", as was claimed by Otto Bauer, the Austrian social-democratic theoretician and leader. Nor was it, as the British socialist Brailsford claimed, "the revolt of the petty bourgeoisie which has captured the machinery of state":

> "No, fascism is not super-class government, nor the government of the petty bourgeoisie or the *lumpen proletariat* over finance capital. Fascism is the power of finance capital itself".[8]

Dimitrov's Report analysed with care the conditions under which fascism arises, the *objective* reasons for the trend to fascism which by the middle thirties was spreading throughout the capitalist world:

> "With the development of the present deep economic crisis, with the general crisis of capitalism becoming sharply marked and the mass of working people becoming revolutionised, fascism has embarked upon a wide offensive. The ruling bourgeosie more and more seeks salvation in fascism, with the object of taking exceptional predatory measures against the toilers, preparing for an imperialist war of plunder, attacking the Soviet Union, enslaving and partitioning China, and by all these means preventing revolution."[9]

Fascism, the Report explained, was an almost universal *trend* of capitalism in deep general crisis, *but this did not mean at all that fascism was inevitable.* Still more it did not mean as some had claimed that its victory should be welcomed as the last stage of capitalism, signal of its certain decay.

An inevitable trend is *not* an inevitable victory. Fascism, said Dimitrov, could and must be stopped, its road could be blocked, and this was why it was (and is) so essential to recognise and defeat it in its early stages, to block every stage of its advance.

Fascism would not collapse automatically, as

[8] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 11.

[9] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 9.

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Togliatti had warned as early as the 12th Plenum of ECCI (in August-September 1932). But even where it was temporarily victorious it could be defeated, overthrown.

The primary cause of its advance and of its victory in certain countries, had been the disunity of the working class, a disunity that arose above all from the theory and practice of reformism, and of the reformist leaders in the trade unions and Social Democratic Parties, from the rejection by those leaders of all the main proposals for united action made by the Communists internationally and in individual countries. But, Dimitrov insisted, mistakes which hampered the development of unity were also made by the Communist Parties, mistakes like the underestimation of the fascist danger, a failure to look for allies in the working class, and to urge the working class to look for allies among the working people—peasants, intellectuals, the youth. At times, he said, the necessary development of a mass fight against fascism was replaced by a barren hair-splitting as to "the nature of fascism 'in general', by a *narrow sectarian attitude* in formulating and solving the immediate political tasks of the Party."[10]

But the principal cause of fascism's advance, and this in Dimitrov's Report became the central point for discussion at the Congress, was the disunity of the working class, the lack of an effective united front.

Unity of Action

It was 1935. Millions of workers all over the world were posing the question of how could fascism be prevented from coming into power, and how, where it had already been victorious, could it be overthrown. The key, said Dimitrov, speaking for the collective who had, under his leadership, prepared the Report, and, indeed, for the whole Communist International, lay in the establishment of working class unity:

> "The first thing that must be done, the thing with which to begin, is to form a united front, to establish unity of action of the workers in every factory, in every district, in every region, in every country, all over the world. Unity of action of the proletariat on a national and international scale is the mighty weapon which renders the working class capable not only of the successful defence but also of successful counter-attack against fascism, against the class enemy".[11]

Right-wing opportunist approaches always tend to treat the *immediate* issues that confront the workers and to slur over or forget the long-term aims of socialism and the task of preparing a socialist revolution. Leftist, sectarian, approaches treat the revolutionary end, but forget the beginning of the revolutionary process. They are not interested *in starting where the workers are*, in aiding them step by step to develop and lift the level of the struggle, and, by patient explanation and education in the course of struggle, in helping them towards a socialist understanding and towards an acceptance of winning the working class and its allies to struggle for political power.

Real revolutionaries see *both* the beginning *and* the end, the inextricable interrelation between the immediate struggles and the long-term aims. They understand the need, as revolutionaries, to develop the maximum unity in the many-sided immediate struggles that face the workers—the unity of revolutionaries with those who are not yet revolutionary, but who are still influenced by bourgeois, reformist, or non-socialist ideas.

For such struggles serve many purposes. They can, in the first place, defend and improve the conditions of the working class (and Communists who fight for socialism, fight equally to secure the best possible conditions for the working people under capitalism). They give the workers the experience of struggle, and, in so doing, educate them up to a point and open their minds to receive the socialist ideas that revolutionaries should be continuously imparting. In the course of such struggles the workers win confidence, come to understand their own strength and capacity, are helped to overcome the many divisions of race, region, religion, skill, age and sex that capitalism continuously seeks to develop amongst them. And as a result of such struggles, finally, the workers can win a better base (more freedom), under capitalism, from which to work for its defeat.

This most important question of the relationship between the struggle on immediate issues and the struggle for socialism and of the development of working class unity in the course of the struggle, was brilliantly developed by Lenin's writings and speeches (as well as in his practice) perhaps most of all in his *Left Wing Communism* (1920). Lenin posed the question of the united front before early Congresses of the CI. But, as we have seen, after Lenin's death, both right opportunist and leftist approaches to questions of unity developed in different Parties within the International and within its leadership. In the years preceding the Seventh Congress there was a particular danger of sectarian attitudes.

The conception of the United Front was seen sometimes as a sort of manoeuvre, of which the essential aim was to expose the reformists, not to inflict blows on capitalism. High level political demands were sometimes posed as a condition for the acceptance of unity on immediate issues. Or it was decided that unity should not be on the basis

[10] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 24.

[11] Dimitrov, *Report*, pp. 30-31.

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of equality, but that all leading positions in united organisations or campaigns should be in the hands of the revolutionaries. The necessity and possibility of united action were often underestimated or not understood.

Dimitrov, long before the Congress, had learned the hard way the necessity of the unity of the working class itself and of the working class with the masses of the working people. His letter to the Commission of July 1934, shows how strongly he felt the need to get rid of sectarian approaches which blocked the path of unity against fascism.

Now in his Report to the Seventh Congress we see him exploring and explaining with a marvellous mingling of passion and of science the whole complex field of working class, popular and anti-imperialist unity in different fields, at different levels, and in different lands.

Unity Not a Manoeuvre

In our efforts to achieve the unity of action against fascism, war and the capitalist offensive, no conditions, he demands, must be posed, other than unity on the specific issues involved:

> "*The Communist International puts no condition of unity of action except one, and that an elementary condition acceptable for all workers, viz., that the unity of action be directed against fascism, against the offensive of capital, against the threat of war, against the class enemy.* That is our condition".[12]

One by one, very patiently, the Report replies to the various attacks made on the conception of the united front by bourgeois critics, reformist opponents, but also, to criticisms made by non-Communists with genuine doubts and suspicions in their minds:

> "Some say: 'To the Communists the slogan of the united front is merely a manoeuvre'. But, if it is a manoeuvre we reply, why don't you expose the Communist manoeuvre by your honest participation in the united front? We declare frankly: we want unity of action by the working class, so that the proletariat may grow strong in its struggle against the bourgeoisie, in order that while defending today its current interests against attacking capital, against fascism, the proletariat may reach a position tomorrow to create the preliminary conditions for its final emancipation".[13]

The Immediate Struggle

The process of unity starts in the struggle on the most immediate issues that confront the working class, and on which they are prepared to fight, no matter how small or humble those issues may be.

Revolutionaries in order to be revolutionary have to study deeply all the conditions of all sections of the working people, and be prepared to join with them in the fight to improve those conditions. This was one of the important matters raised by Maurice Thorez in his contribution on Dimitrov's *Report*, when he was describing how in France, step by step the united front of the working class and the broader popular front of working people around the working class had been achieved:

> "The starting point of our Party's success in the organisation of the United Front and of the People's Front against fascism, was the attention paid to the immediate demands of the toiling masses, the defence of their daily interests".[14]

With great effect Thorez quoted from a Parisian paper (no friend of Communism)—*La République*—published on July 21, 1935 a few days before the opening of Congress:

> "The Communists are perfecting their tactics every day; these tactics are simple, but they have an undeniable power of attraction; they systematically base themselves upon the discontented. If there is a discontented person anywhere, they hurl themselves upon him: 'Comrade the Communists are with you'. Are the ex-service men affected by the emergency decrees? 'Comrades, here are the Communists'. Are government officials affected? 'Comrades, here are the Communists'. The Communists are behind the farmers, the share croppers, the peasants in general, behind the tenants. And since all France is discontented, there they are, the attorneys for the country".[15]

Harry Pollitt, speaking from the more modest but important experience of developing unity in Britain, stressed similar points in the same discussion. We must in fighting for the united front combat the tendency to generalise:

> "We must take into account, in the formulation of our tactics, slogans and organisational forms, the actual concrete situation that obtains—not only in the country as a whole, but in every factory, industry, trade union and working class locality".[16]

We must take as our starting point:

> "the fact that the united front is the class front of the workers, drawing all into the common action to defend *their* wages and conditions, *their* unemploy-

[12] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 32.

[13] Dimitrov, *Report*, pp. 32-33.

[14] Maurice Thorez—"The Successes of the Anti-Fascist United Front", Modern Books, 1935, p. 14.

[15] *Ibid*, p. 16.

[16] Harry Pollitt, "Unity against the National Government", CPGB 1935, p.5.

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ment benefits, *their* rights and liberties, *their* fight against rapacious landlords, to defend *their* trade unions and co-operatives, that is to protect *their* homes and families from the horrors of Fascism and War. . . ."[17]

Trade Union Unity

The quest for working class unity of action meant not only starting the struggle where the workers started, provided it was objectively anti-capitalist, starting at their point of rebellion against the effects of capitalism. It meant that the revolutionary workers must come out of isolation, *be where the workers were*, be members of their mass organisations, fight side by side with them, and this meant for the Communists of many countries, the Western industrialised capitalist countries in particular, in the reformist-led (Amsterdam) trade unions, irrespective of the reactionary positions of many of their leaders.

For Dimitrov, experienced trade unionist, a graduate of the hard trade union school, and for the collective who drafted the report, this was something that the Communist Parties *had to* come to understand:

> "We must base our tactics, not on the behaviour of the individual leaders of the Amsterdam unions, no matter what difficulties their behaviour may cause the class struggle, but primarily on the question of *where the masses of the workers are to be found*. And there we must openly declare that work in the trade unions is the weakest spot in the work of all Communist Parties. We must bring about a real change for the better in trade union work and make the question of struggle for trade union unity the central issue".[18]

In France by the time of the Seventh Congress the stage had been set not only for trade union unity in action but for organic unity (a single organisation). In Britain there had been in the period 1928-30 a deeply sectarian approach and a certain neglect of trade union activity. Harry Pollitt was at the head of the fight for a radical turn in the approach to the unions. In January 1932 in his Report to the Extended Executive of the Communist Party he put forward a dramatic appeal for the fight to transform the trade unions from organs of class collaboration into organs of class struggle. Thaelmann was making a similar stand in the Communist Party of Germany. Thorez and others were leading this turn in France.

Now at the Seventh Congress Dimitrov's Report made clear to the world that the past sectarianism was ended and publicly advanced the real Communist attitude. Communists, he said, are for trade union unity in each country and on an international scale. The *only* condition is "struggle against capital, against fascism and for internal trade union democracy".[19]

This put a clear responsibility on every individual Communist worker:

> "It should be stated categorically that any Communist worker, any revolutionary worker who does not belong to the mass trade union of his industry, who does not fight to transform the reformist trade union into a real class trade union organisation, who does not fight for trade union unity on the basis of the class struggle, such a Communist worker, such a revolutionary worker, does not discharge his elementary proletarian duty".[20]

Approach to Members of the Social Democratic Parties

The task faced Communists in the 1920s and 1930s, *as it still faces us today*, of explaining patiently, again and again, the essence of the reformist (social-democratic) outlook—its denial of the existence of class, its rejection of class struggle and of the dictatorship of the proletariat; and its teaching of the neutrality of the state; its conception of gradual evolution to socialism within the framework of the existing property relations and the existing state; its rejection of revolution; its acceptance of bourgeois philosophy, or, sometimes, as in Britain its rejection of theory (pragmatism), which meant in fact its acceptance of bourgeois theory; its lack of understanding of the class nature under capitalism of the mass media, educational system and other organs of imparting beliefs and attitudes; its anti-communism, rejection of unity; its gradual loss of socialist objective until even the *word* socialism was forgotten and the socialist aim replaced by the conception of "mixed economy".

It was then as now an essential task to explain in terms of past experience and of dangers for the future that the key issue of reformist practice was *not* one of sincerity or insincerity, conscious or unconscious betrayal, but that reformist practice, and above all the practice of reformist governments in office, inexorably led to defeat and betrayal, that reformism in practice weakened the fight against capitalism, defended capitalism, that governments based on reformist theory, whatever their election pledges, ended by defending capitalism, and becoming themselves the prisoners of the capitalist system.

Both theory and practice showed that reformism opened the road to fascist advance.

When the experience of social democratic governments putting into practice their reformist theories had disillusioned workers with what they often

[17] *Ibid.*
[18] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 60.
[19] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 63.
[20] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 64.

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thought was socialism, and when the Communists were not yet strong enough to win the support of the workers, the danger of fascism, and of fascist demagogy was (and still is) particularly great.

It was totally correct for the Communist International and Communist Parties to criticise most sharply the theory and practice of reformism (social-democracy). But in so doing, particularly in the period 1928-31, as we have seen, there were many sectarian mistakes in the approach to social democracy—a tendency to make *indiscriminate* attacks that confused leaders and the masses, to attack as *conscious* traitors all those under the influence of reformist ideas, to reject or make difficult united action on immediate issues with workers influenced by social-democracy or to pose unacceptable conditions for such unity. There was often a failure to see how, particularly with the world economic crisis and rise of fascism, the possibility that masses of working people influenced by reformism (including many leaders) could change their outlook, that nothing was unchangeable, and that the role of the revolutionary was, precisely, to help not hinder such change.

Dimitrov pointed again and again in his Report, Reply and Concluding Speech that such a change *was* taking place amongst the mass of workers influenced by reformism and inside the Social Democratic Parties. The rejection of reformism by such workers was not an overnight, instantaneous act, but a *process*, often uneven, the speed of which would depend upon objective conditions, the level of struggle, and the skill of education and explanation by revolutionaries.

> "The process of revolutionisation in the ranks ot the Social-Democratic Parties, now going on in all countries, is developing unevenly. It must not be imagined that the Social-Democratic workers will *at once* and on a mass scale pass over to the position of consistent class struggle, and will *straightway* unite with the Communists without any intermediate stages. In a number of countries this will be a more or less difficult, complicated and prolonged process, essentially dependent, at any rate, on the correctness of our policy and tactics".[21]

The rejection by the Social-Democratic workers of their reformist outlook would *not* result from objective conditions alone:

> "No. It is our business, the business of Communists, to help them free themselves from the hold of reformist ideology".[22]

And this must be done not in a spirit of complacent superiority, but in a patient fraternal way, above all in the course of common struggle.

People's Front

We cannot in this article discuss all the manifold aspects of Dimitrov's treatment of the need and possibility of developing around the working class the broad popular (people's) front of struggle against fascism, war and social reaction, in which he based himself in particular on the example of the People's Front in France.

Fascism attacks not only the working class but all sections of the working people—the peasantry, the town petty bourgeoisie, the intellectuals. It threatens their living conditions, the suppression of all the freedoms that they have won in struggle, all that is progressive in their cultural tradition. From such an objective condition arose both the need and possibility of the People's Front:

> "In mobilising the mass of working people for the struggle against fascism, the formation of a wide, popular anti-fascist front is a particularly important task. The success of the whole struggle of the proletariat is closely bound up with establishing a fighting alliance between the proletariat on the one hand, and the toiling peasantry and basic mass of the urban petty bourgeoisie, who together form the majority of the population even in industrially developed countries, on the other".[23]

Only the working class can effectively lead such a broad front, and the more united the working class, the more effective can this leadership be. A heavy responsibility falls on the shoulders of the workers energetically to fight for the interests of their allies:

> "The fundamental, the most decisive thing in establishing the anti-fascist People's Front is *resolute action of the revolutionary proletariat* in defence of the demands of these sections of the people . . . demands in line with the basic interests of the proletariat. . . ."[24]

Dimitrov explored in his *Report* aspects of the struggle to develop in the colonial and semi-colonial countries a broad anti-imperialist front, a problem treated in detail in the Report of Wang Ming. He considered the problem of revolutionary activity in the mass fascist organisations and the possibility of turning against fascism the demagogic fascist slogans.

Again and again he made reference to the success of the French Communists in achieving, at different levels, unity against fascism, and in particular in relation to certain important aspects on the ideological front.

[21] Dimitrov, *Reply*, p. 105.

[22] *Ibid*, p. 105-106.

[23] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 39.

[24] *Ibid*. p. 40.

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Democracy and Socialism

Many weaknesses in the anti-fascist struggle, said Maurice Thorez, speaking in the discussion on Dimitrov's report, were due to an inaccurate estimate of fascism, and confusion with regard to the specific nature of fascism compared to bourgeois democracy:

> "From this fundamental error there could only follow passivity, underestimation of the fascist danger and of the terrible menace that it represents for all peoples, both by the exercise of its bestial dictatorship, as well as by its foreign policy of adventure and provocation, which leads directly to war".[25]

Dimitrov drew deeply from the French example and did much in his Opening Report and Reply to Discussion to develop understanding of the essential relation between the fight for democracy and the fight for socialism, which had often been forgotten or misunderstood in the years preceding the Congress, particularly after 1928. In so doing he was fighting for a return to the approach of Marx, of Engels and Lenin.

Lenin as early as 1916 had forecast already that monopoly capitalism would inevitably attack democracy:

> "The political superstructure of this new economy of monopoly capitalism (imperialism is monopoly capitalism) is the change from democracy to political reaction. Political reaction corresponds to monopoly. . . . Both in foreign and home policy imperialism strives towards violation of democracy, towards reaction. . . ."[26]

No-one more than Lenin so continuously and profoundly analysed the restrictions of democracy under capitalism even at its best, nor contrasted it so clearly with socialist democracy. But at the same time he always argued that the working class in the struggles for socialism, indeed, as an integral part of its struggle for socialism, must struggle to defend and extend every aspect of democracy, every measure of freedom, which, in the course of its struggles, it has won. It would be a mistake, he wrote, to suppose that the struggle for democracy can divert the proletariat from the socialist revolution, or obscure or overshadow it. On the contrary:

> "in the same way as there can be no victorious socialism that does not practice full democracy, so the proletariat cannot prepare for its victory over the bourgeoisie without an all-round, consistant and revolutionary struggle for democracy".[27]

When Dimitrov quoted these words in his Reply to Discussion he was bringing the delegates right back to the Leninist tradition of approach to democracy, and developing further the Leninist approach in the light of the rise of fascism.

We support socialist democracy, he declared in his report, but will defend in the capitalist countries every inch of bourgeois-democratic liberty attacked by fascism and bourgeois reaction.

In his Reply to Discussion he returned to the same issue. He criticised the Polish Party for its misgivings about formulating positive democratic demands for fear of creating democratic illusions among the people. Other Communist Parties, he added, shared such fears. What is necessary, he explained, is a dialectical conception of our attitude to bourgeois democracy. Of course it cannot compare to Soviet democracy, which presupposes the victory of socialist revolution, the conversion of private property in the means of production into public property, and which will itself develop on the road to a classless society:

> "But today the millions of toilers living under capitalism are faced with the necessity of deciding their attitude to *those forms* in which the rule of the bourgeoisie is clad in various countries. We are not Anarchists and it is not at all a matter of indifference to us what kind of political regime exists in any given country; whether a bourgeois dictatorship in the form of bourgeois democracy, even with the rights and liberties greatly curtailed, or a bourgeois dictatorship in its open fascist form. While being upholders of Soviet democracy, we shall defend every inch of the democratic gains which the working class has wrested in the course of stubborn struggles, and shall resolutely fight to extend these gains".[28]

Patriotism and Internationalism

Another important example was set by the French Communists who showed by their theory and practice the correct relationship between real patriotism and international working class solidarity.

There had in the years that preceded the Seventh Congress been numerous errors in this connection in different sections of the international Communist movement—tendencies sometimes to equate internationalism and anti-nationalism or national nihilism, or to be slow and shamefaced in defending all that was best in the past of the people's struggle or in the culture of a particular country, and to

[25] Maurice Thorez, *op. cit.* p. 6.

[26] V. I. Lenin, *A Caricature of Marxism*, written in August-October 1916, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23, p. 43.

[27] V. I. Lenin, *Socialist Revolution and the Right of Workers to Self-Determination*, written January-February 1916, *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, p. 144.

[28] Dimitrov, *Reply*, p. 109.

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allow deep genuine national sentiments to be, as it were, given to the class enemy, diverted by ultra-nationalists, chauvinists, demagogues, into the most reactionary channels.

In Germany the Nazis were able with much too great an ease to pull behind the ugly banner of fascism the wounded national sentiments and indignation of the masses of the German people against the Treaty of Versailles.

Once again it was necessary to return to the positions of Marx and Lenin and apply their teaching on the national question to the conditions of the fascist offensive.

Dimitrov's whole experience and record had fitted him very well to show the dialectical relationship between patriotism and internationalism. Before 1923 he was one of the most consistent internationalists in the Bulgarian Communist Party, which in any case had an excellent record in this respect. Whilst working in the international Communist movement he never for a moment lost contact with the Bulgarian Party. At Leipzig he defended the Bulgarian people as well as the International. On his return to work in the CI this question was one that much concerned him both in relation to the causes of the defeat in Germany and of the successes in France.

Discussing the ideological struggle against fascism in his *Report*, he expressed the opinion that the Communist Parties reacted inadequately and too slowly to the demagogy of fascism, and underrated fascism's power of ideological infection. Nationalism, he explained, was one of the most widespread components of fascist demagogy. The fascists liked to present themselves as continuing the traditions of the "great" days and "great" leaders be it Garibaldi, Abraham Lincoln or Joan of Arc.

But are not, he asked, Communists concerned with the past of the nations?

> "Communists who suppose that all this has nothing to do with the cause of the working class, who do nothing to enlighten the masses on the past of their people, in a genuinely Marxist, a Leninist-Marxist, a Leninist-Stalinist spirit, who do nothing to *link up the present struggle with the people's revolutionary traditions and past*—voluntarily hand over to the fascist falsifiers all that is valuable in the historical past of the nation, that the fascists may bamboozle the masses.
>
> "No, comrades we are concerned with every important question, not only of the present and the future, but also of the past of our own peoples. . . .[29]

Dimitrov quoted Lenin writing on this subject in "On the National Pride of the Great Russians" (written in 1914). And he declared, repeating Lenin's thoughts in his own words:

> "We Communists are the *irreconcilable opponents, on principle*, of bourgeois nationalism in all its forms. But we *are not* supporters of *national nihilism*, and should never act as such. The tasks of educating the workers and all working people in the spirit of proletarian internationalism is one of the fundamental tasks of every Communist Party. But everyone who thinks that this permits him or even compels him, to sneer at all the national sentiments of the wide masses of working people is far from being a genuine Bolshevik. . . ."[30]

There is no contradiction between real people's patriotism and people's internationalism. On the contrary they are necessary to each other, interconnected, two sides of the same medal:

> "Comrades, proletarian internationalism must, so to speak, "acclimatise" itself in each country in order to sink deep roots in its native land. *National forms* of the proletarian class struggle and of the labour movement in the individual countries are in no contradiction to proletarian internationalism; on the contrary it is precisely in these forms that the *international interests* of the proletariat can be successfully defended".[31]

Dimitrov all his life stood for the defence of the Soviet Union from capitalist attack, for consistent solidarity with the USSR. This was for him an essential, integral, part of proletarian internationalism, moreover it was a condition for the victory of the working class in any country:

> "The working class in the capitalist countries can triumph *only in closest alliance* with the victorious proletariat of the great Soviet Union".[32]

He saw the attitude to the Soviet Union as the *touchstone* by which to judge the sincerity of those in the struggle against fascism, as a criterion for determining who was a friend and who an enemy in the fight for peace.[33]

In the discussion on Dimitrov's *Report*, Pollitt, Gottwald, and especially Thorez took up the question of the unity of patriotism and internationalism. All confirmed Dimitrov's approach summed up in his words quoted in a recent article of Todor Zhikov, today the First Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party and President of the State Council:

> "There can be no genuinely popular patriotism without international solidarity any more than

[29] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 78.

[30] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 79.

[31] *Ibid*, p. 80.

[32] *Ibid*, p. 81.

[33] See Dimitrov, *The Soviet Union and the Working Classes*, November 1937, in *The United Front*", p. 279.

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genuine international solidarity without genuinely popular patriotism".[34]

Dimitrov and the Youth

A field where fascist demagogy, including nationalism, was having a most dangerous influence in the early thirties, was amongst the youth. In the years that preceded the Seventh Congress, but particularly at the end of the twenties and early years of the thirties, sectarianism was especially deep in the Young Communist International (YCL; in Russian abbreviation KIM). Every sectarian attitude that existed in the CI, the YCI had it better or rather worse. And this is true of many of its sections including Britain. Amongst the youth sectarianism was peculiarly harmful, and helped the demagogy of fascism to penetrate that much more easily.

Dimitrov in his *Report*, in a few words touched upon the problem. It should be noted that he had always been deeply interested and involved in the youth movement and remained so until his death.[35] He attacked YCL sectarianism:

> "In a number of capitalist countries, our Young Communist Leagues are still mainly sectarian organisations divorced from the masses. Their fundamental weakness is that they still try to copy the Communist Parties, to copy their forms and methods of work, forgetting that the YCL is *not a Communist Party of the Youth*. Its methods and forms of work, education and struggle, must be adapted to the actual level and needs of the youth".[36]

He accepted that responsibility for the weaknesses of the YCL should be shared by the Communist Party. Quoting the examples of France and the United States (and important developments were taking place in Britain by this period), Dimitrov put forward the double task of unity of the socialist youth, and a broad front of the non-fascist youth, unity of the young generation of working people around the working class.

Otto Kuusinen developed Dimitrov's remarks in an important speech to the Seventh Congress.[37] A couple of months later Dimitrov opened the Sixth Congress of the Young Communist International.[38] Fascism, he explained, was attacking the whole young generation of working people. The unity of the working class youth, of the socialist and Communist youth, can be the rallying point of a great front of unity of this younger generation. The YCL must be "bold, independent and full of initiative", must study and act together, must get rid of every approach that obstructs the development of mass work. He took a stand on the independence of the YCI:

> "In the name of the ECCI I declare that the youth united in the ranks of the YCI enjoys and will continue to enjoy every opportunity of *independently* developing its revolutionary movement and solving the problems of this movement".

Problems of the Road to Socialism

A problem which continually preoccupied Dimitrov throughout his political life was the changing *forms* of advance to socialism in different conditions in different countries with the changing relations of class forces in the world.

In 1923 he was exploring the possibility of a workers' and peasants' government in Bulgaria arising out of the developing unity with the Agrarian Union in struggle against the military-fascist regime.

In his *Report* at the Seventh Congress he explored the possibility of Governments arising out of the united or popular front against fascism:

> "We recognise that a situation may arise in which the formation of a government of the *proletarian united front*, or of an *anti-fascist People's Front*, will become not only possible but necessary in the interest of the proletariat".[39]

He made it clear that he was speaking not of a *socialist* revolution, but an advance before or on the eve of a socialist revolution. The government would arise *out of the struggle*, and would be primarily a government of struggle against fascism and reaction, formed under conditions of political crisis. He was exceedingly careful to avoid too doctrinaire a presentation of the possibilities or character of such a government. When and where it might arise could not be stated in advance, but its possibility could not be ruled out in any of the capitalist countries.

Dimitrov spoke of the mistakes that had been made at the Fourth Congress of the CI in 1922 and the Fifth Congress in 1924 in relation to the slogan of a "workers" or of a "workers' and peasants'" government. The right wing mistake had been to see such a government arising unconnected with the crisis, with developing unity and struggle, as something possible in any "normal" situation. The leftists, on the other hand, saw such a government as arising from armed insurrection and only after

[34] *World Marxist Review*, No. 3, 1972.

[35] See Anthology—*Georgi Dimitrov: For Youth*—Sofia Press, 1968, 160 pp.

[36] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 65.

[37] O. Kuusinen—"The Movement of the Youth and the Struggle against Fascism and the Danger of War", Modern Books, 1935.

[38] Dimitrov, *Speech Opening Sixth Congress of YCI*, September 25, 1935.

[39] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 70.

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the overthrow of the bourgeoisie. Both, he said, were equally wrong.

This deep concern with problems of the *forms* of advance to socialism, and the need constantly to seek out new possibilities in relation to changing conditions in the world and in each specific country continued to preoccupy Dimitrov for the rest of his life. He studied in this context the character of the Spanish Republican Government.[40] He was one of the first after the defeat of fascism in World War II to explain the new possibilities that now arose. He spoke of this in his speech on the *Historic Mission of the Bulgarian Workers' Party(Communists)* at the Sofia Regional Conference of the Party on February 26, 1946:

> "It is a well known fact that the future of all nations lies ultimately in the triumph of socialism. But the struggle for socialism is to be understood in a different way from 1917 or 1918, when the October Revolution took place".[41]

New roads to socialism were arising in Bulgaria and other lands. He developed this theme further in his talk with members of the Bulgarian Young Workers' League on March 1, 1946.[42] Less than a year before his death he explained in his Report to the Fifth Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party his ideas on the nature of People's Democracy as a form of advance to socialism.

The Communist Party

The last section of Dimitrov's *Report* dealt with the role of the Communist Parties themselves. The concentration on the need for unity did not mean in any sense belittling the role of the Party. On the contrary:

> "Only the Communist Party is at bottom the initiator, the organiser and the driving force of the united front of the working class.
>
> The Communist Parties can ensure the mobilisation of the widest masses of working people for a united struggle against fascism and the offensive of capital only if they strengthen their own ranks in every respect. . . ."[43]

The strengthening of the Communist Parties, he said, is in this relation not a narrow Party concern, but the concern of the entire working class.

The *Report* discussed the possibility of the establishment of a single, united, revolutionary Party of the working class. In the negotiations for united action between the Communist and Second Internationals or between Communist and Social-Democratic Parties in different countries, the Second International or its sections, in rejecting proposals for unity of action, often referred to the *prior* necessity of organic unity, the formation of single working class Parties.

The interests of the class struggle and of successful socialist revolution, said Dimitrov, made the establishment of a single party of the working class imperative in each country. But to achieve it would be a *prolonged* process of united action and mutual discussion. There were conditions for such a united party—the acceptance, for instance, of *Marxism-Leninism*, of the need for socialist revolution and the dictatorship of the proletariat, rejection of support for imperialist war, acceptance of the organisational principle of democratic centralism, but there were also conditions for *arriving at the possibility* of achieving a united party. The Social Democratic Party would have to come to achieve complete independence of the bourgeoisie. Step by step unity of action would have to be started and developed. Heart-searching discussions would be needed on the nature, role and programme of a Marxist-Leninist Party:

> "To propose to unite at once instead of forming a united front means to place the cart before the horse and to imagine that the cart will then move ahead. Precisely for the reason that for us the question of political unity is not a manoeuvre, as it is for many Social-Democratic leaders, we insist, on the realisation of unity of action as one of the most important stages in the struggle for political unity".[44]

Dimitrov accepted completely the need for the Communist Party, locally and nationally to win the leading role in the struggle for action. But by *win* he meant to *earn* by its example, by the wisdom of its teaching and the efficacity of its leadership in action. *The leading role could not be imposed.* It was *not* some god-given automatic right:

> "Self-satisfied sectarianism *will not and cannot* understand that the leadership of the working class by the Communist Party does not come of itself. The leading role of the Communist Party in the struggles of the working class must be won. For this purpose it is necessary, not to rant about the leading role of the Communists, but to *merit and win the confidence of* the working masses by everyday mass work and correct policy".[45]

Against Sectarianism

This tendency to shout at every moment about the leading role of the Party, Dimitrov regarded as

[40] See *Editorial Comments*, *Marxism Today* July 1972.

[41] Dimitrov, *Selected Works*, Sofia, 1967, Vol. 2, p. 179.

[42] *Ibid*, pp. 195-196.

[43] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 82.

[44] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 98.

[45] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 84.

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a form of sectarianism and a keynote of the whole of his *Report*, *Reply* and *Concluding Speech* was the struggle against sectarianism.

He spoke of the fight against right-wing opportunism that was waged by the CI after its Sixth Congress in 1928, but the fight against sectarianism, he said, had been less successful. Sectarianism was no longer as in Lenin's days an "infantile disorder", but had become a *deeply rooted vice*.

Sectarianism took many forms. It was sometimes expressed in the overestimation of the degree of radicalisation of the working class and working people. Action was taken as if all the workers were ripe for revolution; as if they had already abandoned reformist positions. Whole long and complex stages of action and explanation were leaped over. The strength of the traditional links between the masses and their organisations was underestimated "and when the masses did not break off these connections immediately, the attitude taken towards them was just as harsh as that adopted towards their reactionary leaders".[46]

Dimitrov again and again came out against stereotyped phrases, abstract appeals, use of jargon, and what he called cut and dried schemes or "schematism". He attacked in his *Reply* the "*mechanical transposition* of ready-made forms and methods of struggle from one set of conditions to another, from one country to another, as so often happens in our Parties".[47] We must case aside he said, pillory, hold up to ridicule "*all phrasemongering, use of hackneyed formulas, pedantry and doctrinarism*".

He opposed "schematism" in setting up conditions for a united front government. "Life is more complex", he said, "than any scheme". Discussion in an abstract form of which was the main danger, left or right, had come to border on scholasticism, he said in his *Closing Speech*. He ridiculed the replacement of the struggle for a correct line by that peculiar sport—deviation-hunting.[48]

Repeatedly Dimitrov warned against posing demands that as a condition for united action workers who were not yet revolutionaries should accept revolutionary positions or that revolutionaries should dominate the united organisations or campaigns. He wanted, in the words of A. I. Sobolev in a recent article on Dimitrov, "a dialogue between equals".[49]

But he also warned that the concentration of every effort on the achievement of unity—united, popular, anti-imperialist fronts—would inevitably carry with it dangers of belittling the role of the Communist Party.

This must be watched, he said, and in his *Report*, *Reply* and *Closing Speech* inextricably linked the development of unity with the strengthening of the Party.

Living Marxism-Leninism

The Congress on August 20, 1935 came to an end. As Dimitrov brought it to a close he underlined its essential lessons. It was a Congress of struggle against fascism. It was a Congress that put unity as its central task. It was a Congress both principled and down to earth, guided by the method of living Marxism-Leninism:

> "The Congress has taken a firm decision that the united front tactics must be applied *in a new way*. The Congress emphatically demands that Communists shall not content themselves with propagating general slogans about proletarian dictatorship and Soviet power. The Congress insists most emphatically that all tactical steps taken by the Communist Parties be based on a sober analysis of actual conditions, on a consideration of the relation of class forces, and of the political level of the widest masses. The Congress demands that every relic of *sectarianism* be abolished from the Communist movement, as this represents at present the greatest obstacle in the way of Communist Parties carrying out a really mass, really Bolshevik policy".[50]

The Seventh Congress marked an important turn in the history of the Communist International and Dimitrov's Report was a key part of its message. It was in the best sense a *collective* report, but in that collectivity Dimitrov played a leading and creative role.

It was the product of the contributions to CI discussions of men like Kuusinen and Manuilsky, Pieck, Gottwald, Togliatti, Thorez, Pollitt. And it was the product of the living struggles, defeats and successes—defeats in Germany and Austria, advances in France and China, and the beginning in the Asturias of the great struggles in Spain.

Into its creation went all of the life and struggle of Dimitrov himself—his personal witness to the horror of fascism in Bulgaria, his practical experience of forging unity, his life as a trade union leader, his hatred based on experience of empty phrases, stereotyped slogans, words replacing deeds, that combination of patriotism and internationalism of which he was himself a living example.

The Message for the Seventies

Dimitrov would not have thanked us for taking over as a blueprint for the seventies all that he said

[46] Dimitrov, *Report*, p. 85.

[47] Dimitrov, *Reply*, pp. 125-126.

[48] Dimitrov, *Closing Speech*, p. 138.

[49] A. I. Sobolev, *Georgi Dimitrov—Prominent leader and theorist of the Communist Movement*, *Partien Zhivot*, magazine of the CC of the Bulgarian Party, No. 2, 1972.

[50] Dimitrov, *Closing Speech*, p. 137.

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in his Seventh Congress Report. He knew that fresh conditions posed fresh problems and demanded constantly new approaches.

But as in all living and creative Marxism, the *essence* lives on, and, applied in new ways to new situations, there is in the essence of Dimitrov's Report an immense topicality.

Once again capitalism in crisis is tending towards ultra-reaction and fascist dictatorship, with its diverse forms of demagogy and manifold attacks on democracy. Once again there is a particular danger of fascism and extreme reaction in countries where the mass of the workers are disillusioned by reformist government. Once again the question is posed of defeating every attack as it is made, of fighting to defend and extend every measure of hard-won liberty, of turning the defensive struggle against reaction into the offensive for advance in the direction of socialism.

Once again the need of the united action of the working class and the rallying around the working class a broad and popular front of the working people stands out in clear relief.

Today as in the thirties there is urgent need patiently and consistently to explain the nature of reformist philosophy and how inevitably it leads to defeat and betrayal. And, as it was then, it is essential to avoid sectarian approaches, and to attempt to win into action and discussion the mass of the workers still under reformist influence. Today, too, it is necessary to understand that neither workers nor their leaders are born reformists, that no-one is unchangeable, that (and particularly in countries where the mass media are securely in the control of the ruling class) their minds will change as a product of their experience, their struggle and their education, *that there is a battle* for the minds of the people, and that the task of the revolutionary is to help them in every way—in action and in discussion —towards a socialist consciousness.

Today in conditions of the vast extension of the power of United States capital, of the giant supranational, international concerns, of the phoney internationalism of the Common Market, nothing is more timely than posing the issue of genuine popular patriotism as part of genuine people's internationalism.

Nothing is more timely, too, than the understanding that the growth of unity, and the strength of the Labour, working class and progressive movement as a whole, is inextricably linked with the growth of the Communist Party and the Young Communist League.

The best way in which we, on this 90th anniversary of Dimitrov's birth, can pay him our tribute, is not by trying to turn him into a sort of Communist saint untainted by the faults of his peers, nor by learning, as it were, by rote, his writings, but by studying his life, what he said, and did, and taught, by learning from the essence of his actions and approaches, and applying that essence in the course of solving the problems that face us today.

To Dimitrov

I remember the day you died,
I was in Leningrad, about to go
There was a strange hush on every side,
even the river-breeze ceased to blow.

Then in the squares I saw
lorries gathered, people gathering, with no hurry.
The silence was coming from them, a kind of awe,
as quietly they climbed up into the lorries.

The silence was Dimitrov:
at the heart of a stormwind, your death.
I heard your name spoken, Dimitrov,
as if the world again drew its breath.

The silence was an oath struck on the heart,
which I felt the need to take, I too:
the sense of loss one with the mood of departure
as the people halted time to think of you.

Jack Lindsay.

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Memories of Dimitrov

Peter Kerrigan

In mid-May 1935, with my wife Rose and our three year old daughter Rosie, I sailed from London to Leningrad on board the Soviet vessel "The Cooperatzia". I was going to Moscow as the representative of the British Party in the Communist International.

My period of duty also coincided with the holding of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, preparations for which were already well advanced.

In those preparations and particularly in the Congress itself I was to meet Georgi Dimitrov personally, and, as happened to practically all with whom he came into contact, become permanently influenced by his dynamic energy and clarity of thought. His courage and political ability had been demonstrated to the whole world in 1933 in the historic Leipzig Trial.

My first impressions on looking at his powerful face and penetrating eyes confirmed the kind of mental picture I had formed of this heroic man. However, another impression also formed. I thought, in fact I became certain, that the bad physical treatment, the imprisonments (of which the Reichstag Fire Trial was the last), were showing on him to some extent. It did not stand out in any striking way, and looking back I am sure what covered it up was the apparently tireless energy he displayed in meetings and during the Congress itself.

Those who have studied the work, discussions and decisions of that Congress, which went on from July 25 to August 25, well know that it was the second item on the agenda "The Tasks of the Communist International in the Fight for Unity of the Working Class against Fascism" which was the key question dealt with.

Taking the experiences of all the parties, of which the French among the capitalist countries showed the greatest advances, Dimitrov showed the need for developing the united front of the working class. In the process of arguing for it he dealt hammer-blows at sectarianism, and at the same time marshalled his positive proposals in a most convincing way.

Dimitrov's Effect on People

I have been living over in my mind how to show to anyone reading these lines the kind of effect Dimitrov had on people, and I will try to do it in the following way.

I should explain that in the trade union movement in a number of capitalist countries splits arising from policy differences had occurred. Unions which followed the policies decided by the Red International of Labour Unions were called Red Unions.

In Scotland in 1929 a split occurred among the Scottish miners. This primarily arose because the right wing leaders in Fife and Lanarkshire who were defeated in the union elections, refused to give up office, expelled the Fife and Lanarkshire unions and set up their own unions which were given backing by the Miners' Federation of Great Britain. At the time of the Seventh World Congress there were approximately 22,000 in unions backed by the M.F.G.B. and 8,000 in the United Mineworkers of Scotland, out of about 90,000 working in the Scottish Coalfield. The President of the U.M.S. was Abe Moffat. He was a delegate to the Congress and we were sitting together.

In his report Dimitrov said: "We are definitely for the re-establishment of trade union unity in each country and on an international scale. . . . Our only condition for unity in the trade unions is struggle against capital, against fascism and for internal trade union democracy". Further on he said: "In countries where small Red Trade Unions exist we recommend working for their inclusion in the big reformist unions, but demanding the right to defend their views and the re-instatement of expelled members". He then concluded this section of his report with these words:

"It should be stated categorically that every Communist worker, any revolutionary who does not belong to the mass trade union of his industry, who does not fight to transform the reformist trade union into a real class trade union organisation, who does not fight for trade union unity on the lines of the class struggle, such a Communist worker, such a revolutionary worker, does not discharge his elementary proletarian duty".

During the applause which greeted this statement Abe turned to me and said, "Peter, we must have one trade union for the Scottish miners." How he went back and, despite victimisation and unemployment, fought for and achieved one united Scottish Miners' Union and ended up by being elected its President, is told in his book.

For me it is an unforgettable memory of the power of a great man to project a correct policy in such a way as to carry the conviction that impelled Abe Moffat and others like him to overcome all obstacles in the way of realising that policy. I cannot personally think of any better tribute to his memory.

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John Williamson

While it had been my privilege to attend the 5th Congress of the Communist International in 1924 as an observer from the YCL, and the 6th Congress in 1928 as a delegate from the YCL, it was at the 7th Congress in 1935—where I was one of 10 delegates from the Communist Party of the United States of America—that I first met and heard the magnificent Georgi Dimitrov.

At previous congresses the principal Bulgarian spokesman had been Comrade Kolarov, although Dimitrov had been elected a candidate member of the Executive Committee of the CI, already at the 5th Congress.

After following his heroic and challenging defence of communist policies at his political frame-up Reichstag fire trial in September 1933, every delegate to the 7th Congress greeted Dimitrov with the deepest of feeling, as one who had been snatched from the very jaws of the Nazi barbarians.

He spoke three times at the Congress—his main report, his reply to the discussion and the concluding speech of the Congress in his new post as General Secretary of the CI. The ideas expounded in these reports and speeches remain with me to this day, because they dealt with such vital, life and death issues and problems, affecting not only communists but working people everywhere.

His description of fascism as "the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinistic and most imperialist elements of finance capital"; his determined approach that "the road in the way of fascism can be blocked" and that the key to that was "to form a united front . . . and establish unity of action of the workers" around which should be established "a wide popular anti-fascist People's Front"; his emphasis that "work in the trade unions is the weakest spot in the work of all the Communist Parties" and "a real change" must be achieved; his challenge to all dogmatists that "it is not a matter of indifference to us what kind of political regime exists in a given country" and "we shall defend every inch of democratic gains" won by the workers in struggle; and his call to all communists "to speak the language which the masses understand" and get rid of unintelligible formulae—all made history.

To me, as to the great majority of delegates and to the party members back home, Dimitrov's report opened up new horizons, inspired us to new challenging activities and made us proud of the Communist Party. In the previous few years in America we had been talking about a "Soviet America", had been explaining that "social reformism had become social fascism" and talking about the "fascisation of the American Federation of Labour" and that "the most insidious and dangerous . . . of all . . . are the socalled 'left' social fascists".

All this did not square with Dimitrov's report. While social democratic theories and practice of class collaboration were particularly pernicious and harmful in the USA, the masses at that moment were on the eve of the great upheaval of struggle and organisation that built the Congress of Industrial Organisations into a new militant trade union federation of 5 million members, and there were being organised new mass movements for peace and against Hitler fascism.

Dimitrov singled out two things concerning America that still remain in my mind. One, the organisation of a Workers' and Farmers' Party as a specific American form of the People's Front in opposition to the two old parties of the monopolies and opposing the threat of fascism. Secondly, his criticism of those who "assert that Roosevelt's 'New Deal' represents" a "clear and pronounced form of . . . fascism", declaring that in such comrades we see the "survivals of a stereotyped approach. . . ."

I cannot write of knowing Dimitrov personally, only of meeting him and exchanging perfunctory remarks. The 7th Congress of the CI was the first where the US party delegation was politically united. All previous congresses had been burdened with warring factions. Our delegation met Dimitrov. After each of us was personally introduced he thanked us for the campaign around the trial. He then said how relieved he was that there were no factional wars to settle, and immediately discussed the application to the specific American conditions of the Congress's new tactical orientation.

Dimitrov, as a leader of the Communist Party of Bulgaria, undoubtedly made important contributions to that pioneering, revolutionary party. But it is Dimitrov the communist challenger of Goering in the fascist den, and Dimitrov at the 7th Congress of the CI, expounding and explaining the victory of socialism in the USSR, the need for a broad united front movement of struggle against fascism and the imperialist war danger, and for frank self-criticism as the way to develop a hundredfold stronger communist movement, who is remembered on this occasion of the 90th anniversary of his birth.

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Peter Zinkin

The visit of Elena, the sister of Georgi Dimitrov, to England, was a highlight of the campaign conducted by the Reichstag Trial Defence Committee.

A fair sized crowd came to greet her at Victoria Station, where she arrived from the Continent. She was welcomed as her brother's representative and to express solidarity with his fight at Leipzig.

Even the press was there to get her views, which got some mention in the papers. Among those meeting her on behalf of the committee was Dorothy Woodman, Alun Thomas and myself, as the Committee's Secretary. Elena was taken to Dorothy Woodman's flat, where she stayed for most of her few days in the country.

She addressed several meetings organised by the Committee, including a big mass meeting in Kingsway Hall, London, and not only did this give a lift to the campaign, but a big collection helped finance other activities on the trial.

Among the most active members of the Committee were Kingsley Martin, *New Statesman* Editor, and Professor Harold Laski, and about 30 prominent people of varying political views were among its sponsors. Its active workers included members of the International Labour Defence, but there were others.

Ivor Montagu wrote two pamphlets for the Committee about the trial which had a fair sale, one of which was entitled, "Is Leipzig Fair?" a play on words regarding the city in which the trial was taking place.

The only two copies preserved were given to the Dimitrov Museum in Bulgaria some years ago.

Our work was mainly directed to agitation among the people to rouse protests from the Labour and progressive movement against the trial. It included support for the work of the major committee, in which Isabel Brown and D. N. Pritt were among the main figures.

There was an occasion when an attempt was made to proceed with a meeting in Trafalgar Square which had been banned by the police.

Alun Thomas started it off, but was pulled off the plinth by police, and when I followed there was similar treatment. I was pulled off after saying only a few words, and no one else got a chance to speak.

It would appear that the police were given instructions to stop the meeting taking place, but to make no arrests which would have made publicity for the agitation against the trial.

On another occasion an over-hour-long demonstration was held in Piccadilly Circus with traffic being held up and big traffic jams caused. The demonstrators weaved in and out among the traffic shouting slogans on the trial, successfully drawing attention to the Nazi tactics.

The police were baffled and while some of us got warnings, once again there were no arrests, and this at a time when little hesitation was shown by police in action against street actions on other issues.

Such were among other activities through which the Committee played an effective, if modest role in the British campaign to free the Reichstag trial prisoners.

Marxism and Ideology

1. Marcuse and Marxism

John Oakley

*Of these two articles the first—***Marcuse and Marxism***—published in this issue—was intended as a contribution to the debate on Marcuse and was to have appeared in* **Marxism Today** *some two years ago. However, the concern with Marcuse died down as quickly as it has sprung up and the article was held over. The approach was influenced, however tentatively, by Althusser and when John Lewis initiated a discussion on this thinker at the beginning of the year, it seemed useful to offer this as part of an application of Althusser's methods. In short, I am to argue that Marcuse has created a Marxist ideology not made a contribution to Marxist science, but that this has its own value. The second article—Althusser and Ideology—is not then a defence of Althusser. This has now been done by Grahame Lock in the June issue of* **Marxism Today** *and I find myself in complete agreement with the drift and tone of his contribution. It is an attempt to put him to use.*

"The battle of Reason consists in this, to overcome the rigidity which the Understanding has brought in".

G. W. F. Hegel, Lesser Logic, *trans. Wallace, p. 67.*

"The first criterion of reason, then, is a distrust of matter-of-fact authority. Such distrust is the real scepticism that Hegel designates as 'the free portion' of every true philosophy".

H. Marcuse, Reason and Revolution, *p. 46.*

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There was something both paradoxical and amusing about *The Observer* turning its briefing technique, usually reserved for the week's television, good food, underground poets and the smaller galleries, to a knowing breakdown of that heavy thinking which was the ancillary to the 1968/9 events on the continent. The air of disinterested rationality with which the ideas of Herbert Marcuse and others were made familiar seemed at variance with any cliché idea that the left may have had of the role of the press. And what (one might add) are we to make of the enthusiasm with which several highbrow papers, always thought to be firmly aligned at their proper places along the political spectrum, have since condemned the European communist parties for not being revolutionary enough.[1]

We can rule out sinister motives. The liberal press genuinely wants to be liberal. What has to be explained is what this liberalism consists in and the truth seems to be that at the level of ideas it consists in what is fashionable. The full measure of the paradox can be seen in this instance when it is realised that this is precisely one of the things Marcuse is most concerned with; for in our society ideas do not need to be suppressed—they become commodities. Marcuse is himself a victim of the situation for which he found a language.

Marxist Theory

The world of Marxist theory is a strange one to most British people, even those who "teach" it in the academic situation are usually so impervious to its spirit that the result is grotesque distortion. The thinkers whose names are tossed around so cheerfully recently are unintelligible outside this *tradition* which constitutes "Marxism" and it is necessary first of all to sketch in its characteristic preoccupations. It seems usual to regard it as either economics or religion; in fact it is neither. Cutting corners one can say that it is a theory which relates the various accounts of rational activity (sociology, economics, etc.) into an order and establishes a priority. It is, in other words, a theory about the production (genesis) of theories which explain human action. The fact of "scarcity" forces men into productive relations over which they have no control and which determine "in the last instance" all other relations both social and mental. The word which always gives trouble here is "determines".

It implies that while one mode of behaviour (the economic) "gives" the others because it is closest to exterior conditions of the world, other modes will still have their own internal dynamic and may indeed "contradict" the determining one. In short, it is a logical concept in origin[2] and it is, of course, possible to be "illogical", i.e. one mode of conduct may not be congruent with another as, in a man's life, his behaviour in one sphere may be at variance with that of another, his actions with his beliefs and so on.

It is only fair to add that to many people this account of Marxism will seem both crude and wrong. But it highlights controversies which are a part of its tradition in a way which is important if the purpose of thinkers like Marcuse is to be understood. Marx started from a "radical but gestural inversion"[3] of Hegel who saw human history as the progressive realisation of spirit, the closest approximation to which was dialectical philosophy (Reason). By turning this upside down Marx arrived at the idea of a real and tangible world as first mover. But later, and more subtly, he uses the complex metaphor of the extraction of "the rational kernel" from "the mystical shell" to describe what he is doing. On this reading, the various activities have their own structure (dialectic) and are not simply the *reflection* of another structure either exclusively in "mind" (Hegelian idealism) or in "matter" (mechanical materialism). Within this range of various approximations to Hegel, numerous positions can be held and it is important to realise that within the Marxian tradition various positions do in fact co-exist, and that, curiously enough, these current influences represent several such. It should also be stressed that differing emphases often cut across "parties" as such.

Advanced Capitalist Society

Marcuse provides a way of discussing advanced capitalist society which makes the nineteenth century account offered by Marx seem relevant. This is his importance; he disturbs "commonsense". In Hegel's terms the reason provides a critique of the understanding. In *New Society*, May 30th, 1968, John Rex has made a useful summary of what has been orthodox "understanding" among political scientists in the West:

> "Stable democracy, in the sense of a two or multiple party system is something which can be correlated with the level of affluence in a society . . . When the level already attained in north-west Europe and America has been reached, ideological politics in the form of men organising to create a wholly new form of social order is no longer a serious possibility. The working-class have become

[1] See, for instance, coverage of events in Italy.

[2] See Alasdair MacIntyre, "A Mistake about Causality in Social Science" in *Essays in Politics and Philosophy* (Second Series) ed. Peter Laslett and W. G. Runciman (London 1962).

[3] Louis Althusser, "Contradiction and Overdetermination" in *New Left Review* 41 (1967) pp. 15 ff.

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'incorporated' and are quite prepared to work within the framework of parliamentary democracy to achieve particular objectives, while accepting the inevitability of a mixed economy and a welfare state. Moreover as far as Russia is concerned, she has chosen another path towards industrialisation, but given time and rising standards of living, she will modify her institutions and 'converge' with the social patterns of the non-communist world."

"In such circumstances, those who seek to preach ideological politics will find that they have no constituency. No important interest can be mobilised on their behalf and, above all, organised labour will have too much to lose, if it gets caught up in the causes which they preach. The only real dissenters therefore, and the only possible recruits for ideological politics, are those individuals or groups, *who for whatever reason, find themselves* in positions of structural strain or isolation. Among these, students and academics will be prominent but if their problems can be solved they will become quiescent and, in any case, they have no power to do anything effective in the political sphere."

For Marcuse this might indeed be the state of affairs, but he would find it in the ultimate refinement of alienation, a more complete exploitation than any in the nineteenth century and his analysis is concerned with the methods by which the "permissive totalitarianism" of modern society takes hold. To the kind of attitudes represented by Rex's summary he would answer:

"As a whole the existing situation has always been bad: a force resisting the real possibilities of overcoming misery and inhumanity. The fact that revolution no longer has any identifiable 'constituency' and no organised movement on which it could depend does not remove its necessity. But does it really have no 'constituency' today? Neither the ideological veil of a pluralist democracy nor the material veil of extravagant productivity alters the fact that in advanced capitalism the fate of man is determined by the aggressive and expansive apparatus of exploitation and the policies interwoven with it." [4]

"The System"

The inhumanity of capitalism re-appears in Vietnam and elsewhere in an enforced technological initiative. "The system" he maintains "reserves for itself the right to decree whether and when it will achieve 'victory' by burning and poisoning everything". As against this, guerrilla struggle, for instance, is not a radical threat. The poor of the backward countries must find allies in affluent societies, in those strata "which constitute the human basis of the pyramid, the outsiders and the poor, the unemployed and the unemployable, the persecuted coloured races, the inmates of prisons and madhouses" although, also, "in the capitalist countries of the European continent the precondition for the efficiency of a serious opposition remains the political revitalisation of the working-class movement on an international scale". But above all:

"In this situation the opposition of American youth could have a political effect. This opposition is free from ideology or permeated with a deep distrust of all ideology (including socialist ideology); it is sexual, moral, intellectual and political rebellion all in one. In this sense it is total, directed against the system as a whole: it is disgusted with the 'affluent society', it is the vital need to break the *rules of a deceitful and bloody game—to stop* co-operating anymore." [5]

This may give some indication as to the reasons for some of Marcuse's current popularity, but it deserves careful examination. So far his view has the qualities of a mirror inverse of the bourgeois sociologists'. He expands the contradictions of the nineteenth century industrial society on to a global scale and declares them unresolved but concedes the orthodox reading of events for advanced capitalism. The brutal exploitation of the very poor by the rich is still indeed brutal; the relatively poor are bought off *but in the process are the more subtly exploited.* It is in the italicised clause that Marcuse's originality lies or, more correctly, in the language which he develops to describe what he means. There is nothing odd or even new in the fear that the proletariat, as classically understood, has ceased to be the "subject" of revolutionary change—even by those who concede the need for such a change. Nor is there anything new in the substitution of outsider or student or both as primary agent, indeed it is a *reversion.* The madman as critic of society's "sanity" is a familiar romantic theme and may indeed be a helpful way of looking at things (as for instance in the treatment of schizophrenia) but it is not serious politics.

About the mechanics of social change, Marcuse's schematic abstractions are less than helpful. Delineating global antagonisms in this way is not enough; it shows up the wondering what anyone is supposed to do at any given place and time, as, on his own showing, mere "breaking the rules" can be absorbed by the system. Every revolution is and always has been sexual, moral, intellectual etc. It is the Marxist contribution to explore the process of turning gesture into actual advance. The gestures of American youth are politically significant gestures but they remain gestures.

[4] Herbert Marcuse, "The Question of Revolution" in *New Left Review* 45 pp. 3-4.

[5] Ibid., pp. 6-7.

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Similarly what appear to be his assumptions about the absorption of the advanced proletariat into the system are open to similar objections to those which have been made to the same argument in orthodox sociology. The events in France have given clear confirmation of the possibility that the quiescence of the fifties was a pause between different *kinds* of demand. Marcuse, radical though he may be, shows the characteristic separation of the campus based intellectual from the actualities of working-class life. But all this has been said[6] and it is rather more to the point to show where Marcuse does contribute something of value, and where his rather abstract reasoning is actually helpful. Briefly, I would argue that he has provided a language for describing the paradox of the unfree-free society in a way which is particularly appropriate to the situation of the intellectual. It is this, rather than any glorification of the role of the "student" as such which gives him his value—not least in providing a "placing" of the rhetorical fringe of his more political prescriptions.

Influence of Freud

His insights derive from a marrying off of Marx with Freud. Again there is nothing original in this. It is a commonplace in the surrealism of Marcuse's generation and there is a startling way in which Auden's sonnet sequence *In Time of War* reminds one of *Eros and Civilisation*. Yet the superimposition of the language of the one on the situations of the other is arresting if only because it exposes latent facets of the Marxian analysis. The fact of "scarcity" imposes the division of labour and, in the process, the repression of society, of class upon class, becomes internalised ("repression from without has been supported by repression from within"). There is a parallelism:

> "The replacement of the pleasure principle by the reality principle is the great traumatic event in the development of man—in the development of the genus (phylogenesis) as well as in the individuals (autogenesis). According to Freud this event is not unique but occurs through the history of mankind and of every individual." [7]

The victory of the reality principle is not final but has to be occasionally re-established and the "unconscious (or the socially repressed)" retains the objectives of the defeated pleasure principle. For Marcuse this is simply a commentary on Freud and he takes the metapsychology of *Civilisation and its Discontents* seriously. "According to Freud" he maintains "the repressive modification of the instincts under the reality principle is enforced and sustained by the eternal primordial struggle for existence . . . persisting to the present day. Scarcity teaches men that they cannot freely gratify their instinctual impulses." [8] The motive therefore for institutionalised sexual as of political repression is economic. Still not much further than familiar romantic territory, it does not add much to the Weberian insight on the functional relationship between Puritanism and Capitalism, although there are suggestions as to how forms of romanticism itself relate to these two when he goes on to suggest some of the cultural overtones of this. "In so far" he writes "as the full satisfaction of needs is happiness, freedom in civilisation is essentially antagonistic to happiness, it involves a repressive modification (sublimation) of happiness. Conversely, the unconscious, the deepest and oldest layer of the mutual personality, is the drive for integral gratification . . ." [9] Kinds of art, religion and sexual perversion even preserve a "*promesse de bonheur*", express the possibility of this "internal gratification" and will be continuously warred against because:

> "Phantasy not only plays a constitutive role in the perverse manifestations of sexuality; as artistic imagination, it also links the perversions with the images of freedom and gratification. In a repressive order, which enforces the equation between normal, socially useful, and good, the manifestations of pleasure for its own sake must appear as *fleurs du mal*." [10]

Individual and Civilisation

What is striking about all this, it seems to me, is that it gives formal coherence to what has long been familiar—the romantic *topos* of the history of an individual as metaphor for the history of a civilisation and the equation of cultural with personal nostalgia which is found so frequently in poetry for instance. It is not that in any academically acceptable terms Marcuse has united psychology and economics; this is to miss the point completely. What he has hit on is an important interpretation of the recurrent vocabulary of cultural criticism of society. Wordsworth, for instance, does not write about the industrial revolution but what he does write about seems less contingent on Marcuse's terms:

> "According to Freud's conception the equation

[6] See Franz Marek, "Prospects for 'Modern Industrial Society' "—The Political World Scene according to Herbert Marcuse in *Marxism Today* (January 1968), and also Alasdair MacIntyre, "Marcuse's Mistakes" in *The Guardian* (November 1968).

[7] Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilisation*, (London, 1969), p. 31.

[8] *ibid* p. 30.

[9] *ibid* p. 33.

[10] *ibid* p. 54.

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> of freedom and happiness tabooed by the conscious is upheld by the unconscious. Its truth, although repelled by consciousness, continues to haunt the mind; it preserves the memory of past stages of individual development at which integral gratification is obtained. And the past continues to claim the future: it generalises the wish that the paradise be recreated on the basis of the achievements of civilisation." [11]

In short: "*Regression assumes a progressive function. The rediscovered past yields critical standards which are tabooed by the present.*" [12] So far so good; dismissing the case for or against Freud as irrelevant, we can say that we have an insight into the complex of inter-relations in which types of puritanism reinforce types of economic activity through their shared element of rational deprivation and types of romanticism, through the metaphors of "integral gratification", exhibit the sublated possibilities for complete freedom within a complex totality. Applied to romantic poetry this yields an extraordinary clarification of its characteristic combination of sensuality and repression:

> "The primary processes of the mental apparatus in their striving for integral ratification, seem to be fatally bound to be the most universal endeavour of all living substance—namely the return to the quiescence of the inorganic world. The instincts are drawn into the orbit of death." [13]

Thus, even in a moment of reasserted domination by "repression" (the industrial revolution), the contradictory phenomenon of romanticism is a cultural expression of other drives and "the ego retains its birthmark as an 'outgrowth' of the id." [14]
So Blake:

> "You cannot have liberty in this world without what you call Moral Virtue, and you cannot have Moral Virtue without the Slavery of that half of the human race who hate what you call Moral Virtue."

and in Hegel's early theological writing, to which Marcuse devotes considerable attention in *Reason and Revolution*, is preserved the romantic idea of alienation; of how in Blake's words again:

> ". . . men forgot that All deities reside in the human breast."

Yet again, in the *logic* is the "negation of the negation"—the denial of that "bitter adjustment to a punitive present" [15] which is also part of his "logos of domination".

Thus far Freud is guide. Marcuse claims to be revealing what Freud has always had to say to those who are prepared to read him for his radical social message and he is opposed to those who see him as limited in this direction by his bourgeois background (Fromm).[16] He maintains that the social interest is *there* even though it cannot be claimed to be legitimate anthropology. Indeed "we use Freud's anthropological speculation only in that sense: for its symbolic value." [17]

The evidence as such is beyond reach; if it denies common-sense then that is because it deals with "a truth which common-sense has been taught to forget".[18] But Freud, like Marx, deals with an accumulative phase and not with a consumption phase, and in the same way that the proletariat ceases to be the object of overt repression and becomes, as consumer, a partner in the exploitation of itself, so the possibility of happiness becomes not a thing to be forgotten but a thing to be simulated. Exterior controls are replaced by internal ones; dreams as well as bodies can be prostituted and hopes become commodities:

> "The promotion of thoughtless leisure activities, the triumph of anti-intellectual ideologies, exemplify the trend. This extension of controls to formerly free regions of consciousness and leisure permits a relaxation of sexual taboos (previously more important because the overall controls were less effective). Today compared with the Puritan and Victorian periods, sexual freedom has unquestionably increased . . . At the same time, however, the sexual relations themselves have become much more closely assimilated to social relations; sexual liberty is harmonised with profitable conformity. The fundamental antagonism between sex and social utility—itself the reflex of the conflict between pleasure principle and reality principle—is blurred by the progressive encroachment of the reality principle on the pleasure principle." [19]

In other words the relationship of culture to economy has changed. What once meant revolution may now mean acquiescence—something recognised by the surrealists from their own development. Again it is important for the light it throws on expression as a variable in a social totality.

[11] Ibid., pp. 33-34.

[12] Ibid., p. 34.

[13] Ibid., p. 38.

[14] Ibid., p. 42.

[15] Ibid., p. 43.

[16] See Herbert Marcuse, "The Social Implications of Freudian Revisionism", *Voices of Dissent* (New York, 1954) pp. 293 ff.

[17] Marcuse, *Eros and Civilisation*, p. 62.

[18] Ibid., p. 62.

[19] Ibid., p. 85.

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Gesture and Rhetoric

It serves to remind us that genuine innovation cannot be a product of mere trend at either the political or the cultural level. Wants can be manipulated it is true, but they always could, and there were and are extraordinary reserves of scepticism. The nineteenth century worker who was manifestly without essentials was told that if he wanted more, remorseless economic laws would ensure that he got less and the twentieth century worker who has the essentials of physical existence is told something similar but perversely insists on other things as well as the consumer goods which are supposedly dumped on him in such profusion. The events in France have shown that, even in advanced capitalism, the workers are still the historic subject of any radical transition towards socialism although the demands and the methods may change. Ironically, it is the "white negro", the outsider of Western European society, who shows himself most susceptible to assimilation by the system on Marcuse's terms. Gesture and rhetoric are not enough and there is rather too much of the gestural and the rhetorical in Marcuse's writing.

It is as if a verbal formula like "repressive tolerance" dictates all the possibilities at the expense of the contradictions in the real situation. Against the resources of the "opinion-making factories" the resources of the consumers' opinions seem poor. But against the resources of regiments the resistance of the nineteenth century workers ought to have been feeble. But it is not that simple; regiments changed sides—so did generals. To return to where we came in, *The Observer* cannot treat Marcuse's ideas only as commodities; they remain ideas, but not only that—*The Observer* does not want, does not actually understand itself to be wanting, the reduction of Marcuse's ideas to commodities. The fact that they can be is in some ways due to defects in the ideas themselves.

Words Substituted for Action

This brings us back to Marcuse's place in the Marxist tradition. I have suggested that he represents a "Hegelian" incapacity to see the autonomy of the varied factors at work within society. His success is one of finding a language to describe an overall situation—itself a very Hegel-like kind of success. But this facility for verbal success is not a political programme. "Repressive tolerance" is an evocative indication of the realities of capitalism but the danger is that everything comes to be regarded as a manifestation of this and a priority comes to be put on random disruptive action under some such formula as a "vital need to break the rules of a deceitful and bloody game". It is a constant temptation of the powerless intellectual to substitute words for action and they simply do not serve the same purpose although the world of words constantly interacts with that of action, and should do so as economically as possible. In this respect Regis Debray contrasts with Marcuse; here there is a much larger place for the concrete detail of thought and action. Debray's teacher, Louis Althusser (who rated a mention in *The Guardian* but not *The Observer*) illustrates the Hegelian position as follows:

> . . . the reduction of *all* the elements which make up the concrete life of an historical epoch (economic, social, political and legal institutions, customs, morals, art, religion, philosophy and even historical *events*, wars, battles, defeats, etc.) to *one* principle of internal unity is only possible on the absolute condition of taking the whole concrete life of a people for the exteriorisation-alienation of an internal spiritual principle, which can never definitely be anything but the most abstract form of self-consciousness of that epoch; its religion or philosophical consciousness.[20]

If every brick through every window becomes the "determinate negation" of the system then such a concept deserves a rest. But as far as England is concerned, it must be learned first.

[20] Louis Althusser, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

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Discussion Contributions on:

Strategy of Socialist Revolution in Britain

Bill Warren

I

In discussing the *BRS*[1] as a strategy of revolution in Britain, Comrade Pearce feels able to assure us both of the mighty blows that that document has dealt reaction[2]; and to render us a timely warning that the crisis in the labour movement, for which the *BRS* was intended to provide the answer, is now greater than ever[3]. How are these statements to be reconciled? Indeed how are we to reconcile the decline in the already miserable Communist vote with the alleged success and correctness of our strategy over a period of no less than 20 years? These cannot be rhetorical questions, since a bold determined leadership is stated to be crucial to the success of the broad popular alliance,[4] so that continued failure of the working class to follow Communist leadership must necessarily imply that the central link of the entire strategic chain is missing.

Perhaps the answer is that the strategy has been the best possible but the objective conditions have been wrong? To demonstrate this requires precisely that elaboration of the theoretical basis of the *BRS* which Bert Pearce tantalises us with at the beginning of his article.[5] The only way in which this could have been done would have been to examine the British class structure and the theory of class alliances as the theoretical foundation of the broad anti-monopoly alliance: to examine the theory of the state as the theoretical foundation of the parliamentary transition to socialism; and to examine the theory of social democracy as the theoretical foundation of Communist-left Labour unity.

To cut a long story short, Comrade Pearce has neither carried out nor even attempted any of these necessary theoretical tasks. Indeed, in a moment of weakness he admits that no class analysis underlies the strategy of the broad popular alliance,[6] This is what one would expect, since the whole programme is nothing more than a badly written rationalisation of an electoral shopping list.

Theory of the State

And what about the Leninist theory of the necessity for smashing the state and its relationship to the parliamentary transition to socialism? Having by-passed the question of classes, Comrade Pearce has little difficulty in overlooking the theory of the state. Lenin, of course, was not always right. Perhaps his theory of the state was wrong, or at least has no relevance to the present situation. But if this is what Comrade Pearce and the leadership of the British Communist Party believe, let them say so frankly and open a discussion which will help clarify and develop the Marxist theory of the state.

Meanwhile, however, let us remember that Lenin's struggle against the revisionism which wished to shrink from the necessity of a clash with the state machine, was not influenced, as is so often implied, by the special circumstances of the state of Czarist autocracy, but on the contrary, was directly caused by the *bourgeois constitutionalism* of the German

[1] This abbreviation will be used for the "*British Road to Socialism*".

[2] The "most explosive effect in shattering the bourgeois press caricatures of Communism", p. 11, "full of profound ideas", p. 12, "a brilliantly simple but fundamental analysis of modern British capitalism", p. 9, (all references unless otherwise stated to Comrade Pearce's article.)

[3] ". . . . today life is confronting us again, in sharper form, with the crisis of the working class movement that the British Road was designed to meet", p. 8.

[4] ". . . . to the extent the working class is united by bold leadership standing squarely for the interests of all workers by hand and brain, giving a militant and determined example and clearly . . . putting forward the case for Socialism as the only alternatives, then it will attract the support of large numbers." p. 11.

[5] "We must all share responsibility perhaps for the fact that the theoretical basis of the programme is often only superficially treated in many discussions," p. 7 Comrade Pearce modestly remarks.

[6] "Some comrades have queried whether the list of people who could be drawn into struggle against the monopolies corresponds to a Marxist analysis of class forces, and is it therefore really a basis for an alliance of classes in the struggle for Socialism. Of course the list is not a definition of separate class forces". p. 10.

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state, and the surrender to the illusions of bourgeois legality by the German Social Democratic Party at the end of the 19th century which so closely resembles our own position today.

Bourgeois and Socialist Democracy

But if we may take the theory of the state to be an area of legitimate disagreement amongst Marxists (revisionism itself can be considered as a trend within Marxism), we cannot permit ourselves the same latitude with Bert Pearce's remarkable statement that the barrier between bourgeois democracy and socialist democracy is only in peoples' minds[7]: Such a statement has *nothing* in common with Marxism and poses the question as to whether or not Comrade Pearce is aware of the difference between fighting for socialism in a feudal or semi-feudal society *before* the bourgeois-democratic revolution has been achieved and fighting for socialism in a capitalist society *after* the bourgeois democratic revolution has been achieved.

In the former case, where the working class has developed and Marxism has spread, the struggle for the bourgeois-democratic revolution does indeed tend to become transformed into the struggle for the socialist revolution, as happened in Russia—thus Lenin's well-known tendency to treat the struggle for democracy and the struggle for socialism as intimately linked. But once the bourgeois democratic revolution has been won and bourgeois democacy firmly established, as in Britain, then it becomes absurd to regard the struggle for socialism and the struggle for democracy as related in the same way. Whilst making full use of such rights as the workers have won, the full weight of working class militancy must now be used *to expose and defy the institutions of bourgeois democracy, including Parliament* in order to weaken the bourgeois state, pave the way for the decisive assault upon it and thus create the basis for a wholly new form of proletarian, socialist democracy. Unfortunately, both Bert Pearce and the *BRS* appear to regard socialist democracy as little more than a renovated version of bourgeois democracy, and thus give the struggle for democracy almost as much importance as if there had never been a bourgeois democratic revolution.

Defensive Struggle

This exaggerated emphasis on the struggle for the maintenance of bourgeois democracy has serious negative results and is indeed part of a more pernicious failure to develop the classical Leninist analysis of democracy as the specific form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. One obvious negative result is that communist parties find themselves forever committing their main energies to a *purely defensive* struggle to save bourgeois democracy from the alleged encroachment of the monopolies (who for some mysterious reason have maniacal seizures from time to time which cause them to attack their own state). Another negative consequence of exaggerated respect for bourgeois democracy is the hostages that it gives to the bourgeoisie in their eternal efforts to keep political struggle within the bounds of constitutionalism. When the *BRS* describes Parliament as "the supreme organ of representative power",[8] it is helping that same bourgeois propaganda which tries to prevent workers striking against the Industrial Relations Act in the name of the same alleged sovereignty of Parliament. An indication of the resultant disastrous confusion spread amongst the working class is the attempt by a left-wing trade union leader like Hugh Scanlon to deny that the strikes against the Bill were political. Of course they were political strikes. The working class and the Left should glory in the fact *and draw the moral* that bourgeois democracy must be opposed by proletarian solidarity.

Once we return to the Leninist concept of bourgeois democracy as the typical form of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie we are in a position to *expose* the so-called sovereignty of Parliament, to discredit and defy the institutions of bourgeois rule, and in so doing pave the way for the final assault on the state.

II
Labour Party

Although Comrade Pearce thus rather forgets the theoretical elaborations he initially led us to expect, (his reference, p. 18, to the Labour Party as being not "one solid, reactionary structure", is about as close as one could get to saying nothing at all about it), his article is not without a certain convincing ring in places. This is because on at least three major points, Comrade Pearce is apparently able to point to reality and say "Look how closely it resembles the *British Road*!"

First, the mounting industrial struggle of recent years, together with the associated increase in the election of left-wing trade union officials, can be, and has been, presented as the successful working out of the *BRS* strategy in practice. Second, the accession of a Marxist government in Chile by electoral means appears to be a living proof of the possibility of a parliamentary transition to socialism elsewhere, including Britain. And third, what gives conviction to Comrade Pearce's thesis is the argument that those who want a return to the formerly

[7] "Some comrades seem to find difficulty as to how we shall breach the fixed barrier between bourgeois democracy and socialist democracy. But the fixed barrier is in their minds". Pearce, p. 17.

[8] *BRS*. Third Revised Edition, 1968, p. 48.

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held, classic precepts of Marxism are no more than dogmatists, reliant upon standard texts or the experience of the '30's and incapable of the constructive recognition of what is new and developing.

None of these three points stand up on close examination. There has been no success for the *British Road* strategy. We have already referred to the central failure of even a section of the working class to follow the Communist Party even in the increasingly favourable objective conditions of recent years. Despite illusions to the contrary, and despite total exposure in government of the Labour Party's racialism, imperialism and anti-trade unionism, (plus one might add electoral and economic bankruptcy even in capitalist terms)—despite all this, there has been no shift to the left within the Labour Party. If trade-unionists have increasingly elected left-wingers, this is only to a minor extent the result of Communist Party strategy (or activity). It remains in any case an "economist" phenomenon, and above all reflects the profound social forces stimulated and released by the continuing inflation of postwar capitalism. If there had been no Communist Party, workers would still be electing militants in the trade unions and on the shop-floor and their *political* attitudes would be unchanged. It is a measure of the Communist strategy that insofar as it has had success, it has been in organising workers on purely economic issues without any significant political content.

Chile

Nor does reference to Chile carry greater weight. The Marxist government there was permitted to take over only on the condition that the workers and peasants were not armed. In other words, the ruling class state's armed forces are left intact for use at the moment, if ever, that the Government crosses the line between modernising Chilean capitalism and introducing socialism. If, instead of referring to the almost irrelevant conditions of a dependent, partly feudal country such as Chile, Comrade Pearce had instead chosen to refer to the much more relevant case of Finland, a country that far more closely resembles our own, the lessons of the parliamentary road to socialism would have been much clearer. There, the Communist Party, following a revisionist strategy of parliamentary alliance with social democracy exactly like our own, has found itself in a coalition government as the executor of an anti-working class economic policy, with the Communist Party itself split down the middle.

Nor, finally, do the charges of left-wing dogmatism with the corollary that the *BRS* represents a new, creative response to postwar developments and British national traditions, bear examination. Most of the arguments to support a parliamentary transition to socialism, far from representing new, creative, non-dogmatic thinking, are merely repetitions of the classic revisionist arguments of Bernstein and Kautsky which Lenin refuted so long ago. General references to the British democratic tradition ignore the repressive role of Parliament in every period of social crisis, (turned currently against the trade-unions and the immigrants); and it has yet to be explained how the changed balance of world forces is going to neutralise the repressiv apparatus of the British state.

Strategy of Reformism

But what of the critics of the *BRS*? Are they only parrots, repeating Lenin or unable to see anything but the politics of the great crash, dogmatists, longing for the comfort and security of the past? In the limited space allowed not much can be said on this topic. However the outstanding change affecting capitalist society post-war which requires analysis is the disappearance of the trade-cycles and mass unemployment of the prewar type,[9] together with the spectacular growth of the capitalist economies and the living standards of their working classes. These phenomena have been accompanied and largely caused by the increased intervention of the state in the economy. Two possibilities present themselves:—that this implies a more neutral state and that expanding prosperity makes for less militant class struggle—the implication of both these points being to place more emphasis on parliamentary struggle and a parliamentary transition to socialism.

As it happens, neither of these possibilities are actualities. Rising prosperity and low unemployment throughout most of the western world have been accompanied by mounting industrial struggles on a scale not seen for decades. Expanding state activities have, far from "neutralising" the state, integrated its functions more closely than before with the various tasks of maintaining British capitalism against the working class and its capitalist rivals. There have been many changes calling for alterations in revolutionary strategy; but none which can avoid the necessity of smashing the capitalist state. The *British Road to Socialism* is not a "strategy of revolution." It is a strategy of reformisism.

[9] The government-created, balance of payments unemployment of today, has totally different economic origins even though the unemployed still suffer.

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The Crisis of Man and Environment

Dave Waddington

J. R. Horth, in his contribution, stresses that time is the essence of the thing. True, but it follows that there is an awful urgency in convincing Marxists and all active in the Labour Movement that the threat is real. In fact, there is considerable resistance and scepticism on the Left and in the Communist Party itself. Ideas still prevail that Nature (!) never presents problems without at the same time offering the opportunities to solve them; that man has always been able to find a way out; that human beings are resourceful, there is no end to his ingenuity and skill in achieving every aim and desire. Humanism can become dangerously arrogant.

Whilst rejecting despair and cynicism, I am a little wary about the optimism inherent in Marxists to which J. R. Horth refers. It is such "Marxist optimism" which still conditions and strengthens the considerable resistance in the Communist Party and the Left. This apart from the socialist ostriches who simply refuse to look, listen, or read anything about it, in a serious fashion. They still hope it will just go away, if we ignore it long enough.

Why the Delay ?

Hayter and Cox, in their excellent and most welcome article, used some telling quotations. Those from Engels in particular should give us food for thought. But inevitably one is led to ask why we were not alerted before; have we again looked for relevant quotations once events have made us face the problem? Others in the environmental field have been shouting aloud their warnings for many years. Why were Marxists so late in the field when by the very nature of their scientific approach one might have expected them to be the first?

One can perhaps understand those who are heavily engaged in a multitude of political struggles not immediately recognising and responding to the danger signs. It is less easy to understand the long silence of the many Marxist theoreticians who, for instance, have contributed so much to *Marxism Today* and to the development of Marxist thought. We have had no literature, no books, on this subject, as far as I know. The current Communist view of man in the future, in pamphlet form, ignores the question entirely. They have an immediate responsibility to give the help so many of us have been waiting for.

New Approach Needed

So the beginnings of change is very welcome; speed its progress. There are difficult and vital consequences in the field of policy and programme to be faced—as responsible Marxists it cannot be hedged or dodged. The Italian Communist Party recently set an important example in calling a vast assembly of scientists and technicians to begin work on it. Such actions, and the information forthcoming, need wide publicity in our Labour Movement.

The original article suggested, and J. R. Horth makes explicit, that a fundamentally new approach is needed to man's use of natural resources. Working-class power on a wide enough scale would present opportunities for the more permanent and far-reaching measures needed. In fact, the struggle for sane husbandry of resources and a proper human environment—and all the changed criteria and value-judgments involved—may well prove to be our most potent educational stimulus for socialist revolution. Experience so far seems to suggest this. Struggle in industry or amongst tenants, for example, never result automatically in developing political consciousness; that always has to be won by care and persistence. It is not all that easy.

The environment problem seems to be somewhat different. It is not long before many of those concerned begin to realise that their local grievance is part of the whole set-up of society, of super-profitability and vested interest; and that some fundamental change is urgently needed. A fertile field for Marxists—but they seem to be thin on the ground. "Environmentalists" include in their ranks some who may appear cranky, but the more dangerous are the pessimists with elitist ideas and dubious "sociological" approaches.

Implications of the Crisis

This ecological crisis, or whatever you choose to call it, makes the struggle for socialism even more relevant and urgent. But environmental safety and

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